sojourners

February 2016 | sojo.net

Faith in Action for Social Justice

U.S./ Can. $4.95

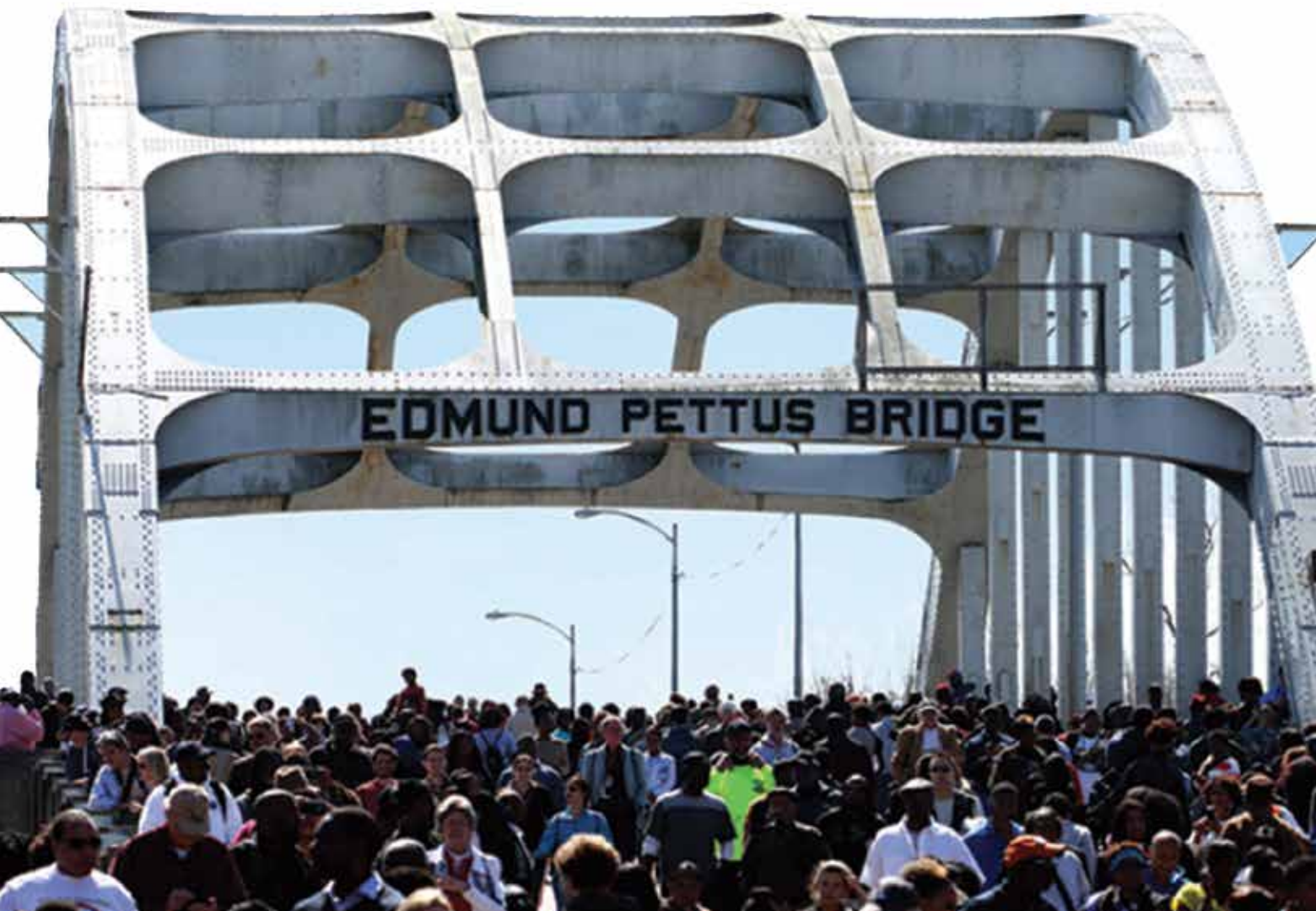
02

0 56698 74678 2

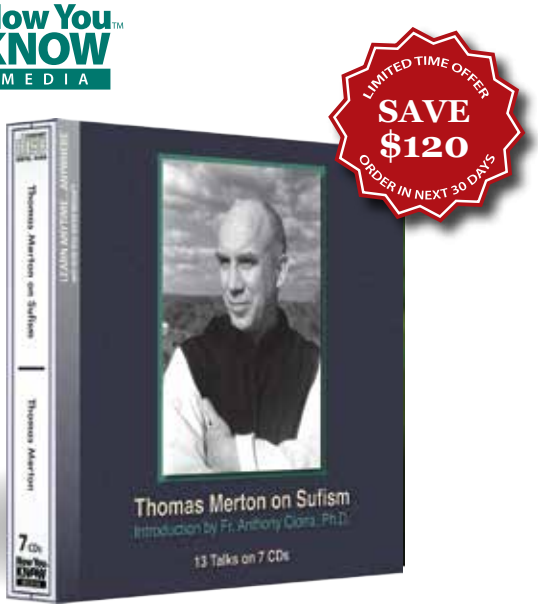
74678

The Bridge to a New America

What if white Christians acted more Christian than white? An excerpt from the new book AMERICA'S ORIGINAL SIN, by Jim Wallis



Now You KNOW MEDIA



Enjoy Thomas Merton's Lectures on Eastern and Western Mysticism

In the twentieth century, Thomas Merton, one of Christianity's great mystics, encountered the ancient Eastern mystical tradition known as Sufism. The result was an outpouring of mystical insight and spiritual wisdom.

In these talks, you will discover what first electrified Merton. The Sufi mystics have given us one of the world's most read poets, Rumi, the beautiful mystical dance of whirling dervishes, interreligious insight, and new forms of contemplation. A visionary who sought to synthesize the best of Eastern and Western spiritualities, Thomas Merton's profound interest in the Sufi mystics is more relevant today than ever.

In one of his talks to the novices at Gethsemani, he said, "The Sufis are seeking to know God and have ways of seeking to know God, and this should have some success with us. . . . We should be closer to the Sufis."

Merton will bring you to new and exciting places as he reflects on Sufism, contemplation, and the mystical life. What Merton taught in the mid-twentieth century is prophetic for spiritual seekers in the contemporary world.

Must order within 30 days of issue date

1-800-955-3904

www.NowYouKnowMedia.com/merton3

Now You Know Media, Inc. • 12115 Parklawn Dr., Unit B
Rockville, MD 20852

Thomas Merton on Sufism

7-CD Set

Presented by **Thomas Merton**

Introduction by Rev. Anthony Ciorra, Ph.D.

Lecture Titles

Introduction by Fr. Anthony Ciorra

1. Introduction to Sufi Thought (4/23/1967)
2. Knowledge of God (4/30/1967)
3. God in Creation (5/14/1967)
4. The Straight Path (5/21/1967)
5. Finding Direction (6/18/1967)
6. Satisfaction in Asceticism: States and Stations (7/2/1967)
7. Awakening to Repentance (7/16/1967)
8. Navigating States of Asceticism (9/10/1967)
9. The Lucidity of Poverty (9/17/1967)
10. Spiritual Trial (10/8/1967)
11. Loss and Identity (10/15/1967)
12. Mystical Awareness (11/12/1967)
13. Obstacles to Mystical Awareness (11/19/1967)

Thomas Merton on Sufism

SAVE $120

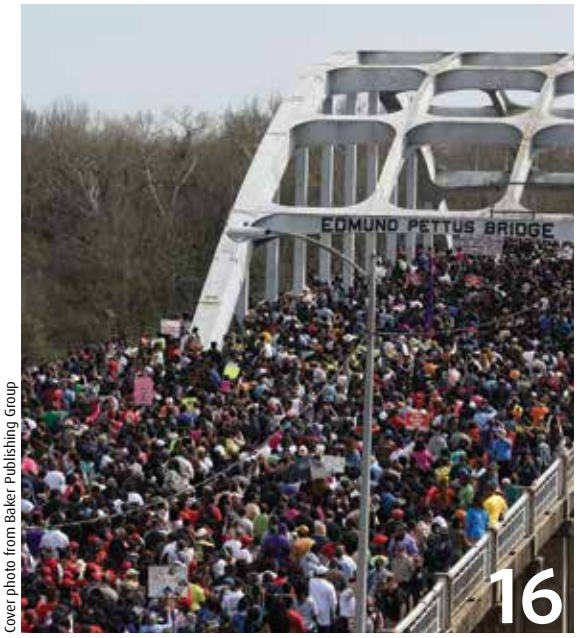
7-CD Set ~~$169.95~~ **SALE $49.95**

+ $8.95 Shipping & Handling
100% Satisfaction Guarantee

Coupon Code: A1924

These special recordings are part of Thomas Merton's spoken word legacy. They are actual recordings of Merton and are part of the archives of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY. Photograph by John Howard Griffin.

Now You Know Media's mission is to bring you the best Catholic professors and retreat leaders in America. Carefully selected for their scholarship, faithful insight and teaching excellence, our speakers will touch your heart and engage your intellect. Visit our website www.NowYouKnowMedia.com to browse our growing catalog of over 250 courses and retreats available in CD, DVD, and MP3 formats.



Cover photo from Baker Publishing Group

contents

FEBRUARY 2016 Vol. 45 | No. 2

COVER

16 Crossing the Bridge to a New America
A new generation leads the way to a future where our growing diversity is experienced as a great benefit, not a threat.
by Jim Wallis

FEATURES

20 Economic Democracy and the Common Good
Is socialism, like the communism of old, fundamentally inconsistent with Christian faith?
by Danny Duncan Collum

PLUS: A conversation with Andrew Wilkes/23

26 The Blue Note Gospel
To be prophetic preachers, we must understand the blues.
by Otis Moss III

32 "...Now We Have a Village"
An interview with "ordinary radical" Shane Claiborne.

CULTURE WATCH

40 Prophetic lyrics in rap and hip-hop
Reviews: *The Armor of Light; Felicity*
Excerpt: *The Study Quran*

42 Eyes & Ears, by Danny Duncan Collum

43 On Film, by Gareth Higgins

COMMENTARY

8 Welcoming refugees

9 Payday lending

10 Immigration ruling

DEPARTMENTS

5 Letters

38 Poetry

48 Living the Word
by Jason Byassee

COLUMNS

7 Hearts & Minds
by Jim Wallis

12 Moving Mountains
by Lisa Sharon Harper

14 Deep Economy
by Bill McKibben

50 H'rumphs
by Ed Spivey Jr.

A BOLD, PROPHETIC MESSAGE OF HOPE

"Jim Wallis has been speaking truth to power for decades. This new work is timely, urgent, and necessary."

—BRYAN STEVENSON

"By laying out a bold, prophetic message of hope, Jim calls for the change we need in a society suffering from the deep and open wounds of white supremacy."

—SERENE JONES

"In this powerful book, [Wallis] calls for a new conversation and action on the ground—in our homes, churches, sports, and schools—in order to be true to the best of who we are!"

—DR. CORNEL WEST

"A thoughtful, heartfelt, compassionate plea for us to heal the wounds of racial injustice and build a new America, and a new world, together."

—SHANE CLAIBORNE

"I encourage everyone who is concerned about our democracy and who desires to see the church live out its true mission of love and justice to read this prophetic epistle."

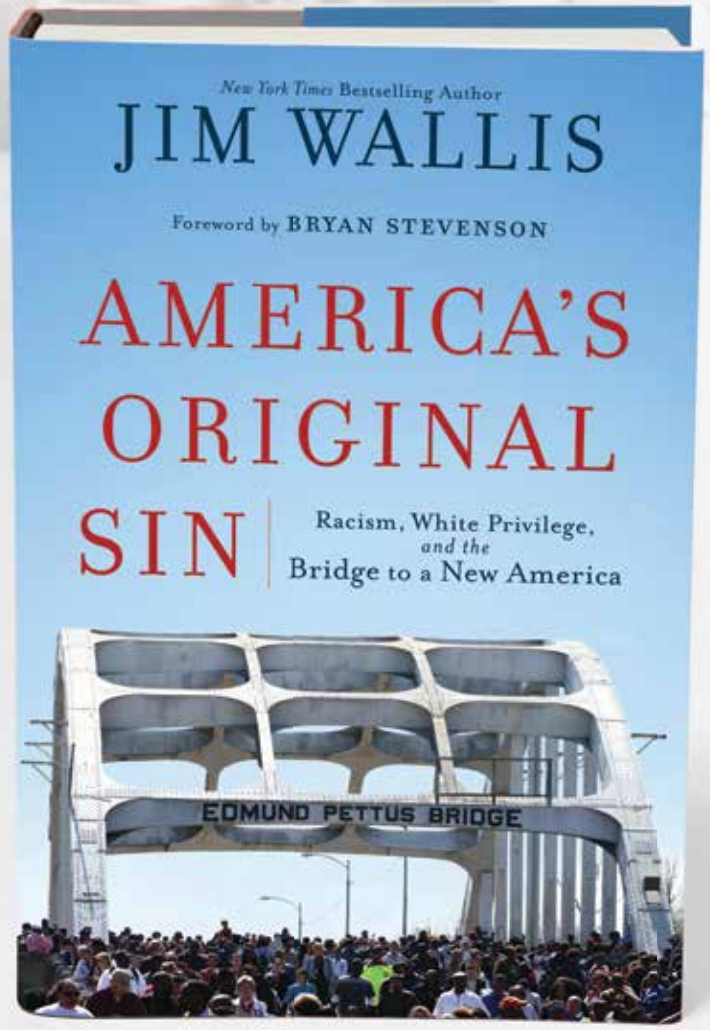
—REV. DR. OTIS MOSS III

"In this powerful book, Jim Wallis outlines the path forward, a path of true repentance and one that moves us in a new direction, as a new people."

—MICHAEL O. EMERSON

"A masterpiece that pulls readers into a conversation that the church and society have needed for decades."

—BISHOP CARROLL A. BALTIMORE



978-1-58743-342-9 • 272 pp. • $21.99c

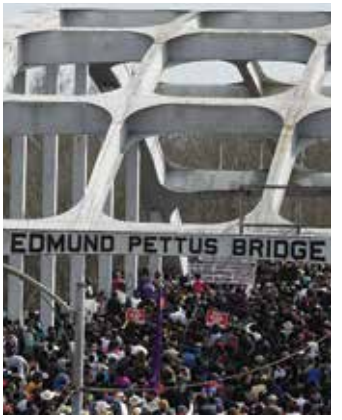
JIM WALLIS is president and founder of Sojourners and editor in chief of *Sojourners* magazine. He is a bestselling author, public theologian, national preacher, social activist, and international commentator on ethics and public life.

Visit WWW.AMERICASORIGINALSIN.COM for more information.

BrazosPress
brazospress.com #repentracism
Available in bookstores or by calling 800.877.2665
Visit our blog: thebrazosblog.com

ACCORDING TO A fall 2015 survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute, a majority of white Christians still believe that the recent spate of police killings of black men and women are isolated incidents. "While religious leaders have mobilized in the last year to talk about police violence, discrimination, and racial inequality, these efforts have had little measurable impact in the pews," said Dr. Robert P. Jones, CEO of the research organization. "White Christians across denominational families are far less likely than black Christians to perceive that there is even a problem."

These white Christians—including 72 percent of white evangelical Protestants, 73 percent of white mainline Protestants, and 71 percent of white Catholics—fail to acknowledge the uncomfortable truth that violence against black men and women is part of a broader pattern of racial inequity in our criminal justice system—and in so many other areas of life.



In his new book, *America's Original Sin*, excerpted in this issue, Jim Wallis draws on Jesus' words in the gospel of John—"you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free"—to challenge white Christians to acknowledge the sin of white supremacy. "Are we hiding behind untruths that help make us feel more comfortable," asks Wallis, "or are we willing to seek the truth, even if that is uncomfortable?"

This year, Lent comes early. On Feb. 10, many Christians will wear ashes on their forehead, a sign of repentance that marks the beginning of the 40-day season of sacrifice and surrender. And for white Christians this year, Lent comes with a very specific agenda: a call to repent from the sin of white supremacy. But before we can repent, we—all Christians, regardless of race—must agree that our nation has a problem. "Sin can be repented of and changed," writes Wallis, "but only when we acknowledge it for what it is." ■

Letters

Not My Son

I really appreciated Danny Duncan Collum's "America's Blood Sport" (December 2015). Although I have played and coached football and still enjoy watching football, I would not sign a consent form for my son to play. I have heard active coaches say that they would not let their kids play.

I hope that we as coaches and parents do not continue to adopt the attitude that many people have adopted regarding war. War is okay as long as someone else's kids are getting hurt or killed; football is okay as long as someone else's kids are getting their brains damaged.

Ron Ostrosky
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Because of that film, I started boycotting the NFL.

America's Blood Sport

I saw the original *Frontline* special that discussed the issue of "America's Blood Sport." The film was tragic, but seeing that doctor cry was more so. He was just a man doing his job—being a scientist—and they really tried to discredit him and insinuate he was a hack. Because of that film, I started boycotting the NFL. They have a tremendous amount of wealth and power to smudge facts. But, more importantly, they have the ability to take care of those athletes and choose not to.

Natacha Jeanty
Facebook comment

Responsible Contraception

Thank you so much for bringing the conversation on contraception to public light ("The Politics of Contraception"). I am a believer who used to be politically conservative, but I had to switch my vote to the progressive side of politics when conservative ideology kept moving away from biblical principles, especially Jesus' teachings.

The one issue I held onto as a new progressive is my stance against abortion except in the instances of rape, incest, and life of the mother. In order for me to responsibly hold on to my stance, I have to advocate for contraceptives and societal and personal responsibility in managing reproduction via sex education, medical care, and contraceptives.

Deborah Birdsong
Facebook comment

Called to Stewardship

Thank you for Jim Wallis' very thoughtful article "The Matthew 25 Test" (November 2015). As a retired clergywoman I continue to find ways to be a good steward, which is not easy as I am at home mostly. But I still contribute to my local church needs and even occasionally reach out to the unchurched. Keep up the good work! P.S. The entire magazine is just great!

Anne Guild-Donovan
Tucson, Arizona

Correction

In our November 2015 issue, we incorrectly stated that Josué Ramírez of the Texas Housers was a beneficiary of the Dream Act. Though Ramírez was undocumented when his parents brought him to the United States, he became a naturalized citizen and later attended the University of Texas-Austin as an in-state resident.

"I have something to say about that!" *Write to letters@sojo.net or Letters, Sojourners, 3333 14th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20010. Include your name, city, and state. Letters may be edited.*

sojourners

President/Editor-in-Chief, Jim Wallis
Chief Executive Officer, Robert Wilson-Black
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Michael Norman
Vice President, Human Resources, Karen L. Lattea

Editor, Jim Rice
Art Director, Ed Spivey Jr.
Senior Associate Editors, Rose Marie Berger, Julie Polter
Assistant Editor, Betsy Shirley

Senior Director of Circulation and Production, Cynthia J. Martens
Director of Advertising Sales, Sandra Sims
Advertising Sales Associate, Katie Zimmerman

Chief Advancement Officer, Larisa Friesen Hall
Senior Director of Foundation Relations and Performance Officer, Lisa Daughtry-Weiss
Director of Major Gifts, Kaitlin Hasseler
Director of Individual Giving, Rashad T. Bailey
Manager of Planned Giving, George Lee
Donor Services Associate, Beth Cooper-Chrismon

Web Editor and Chief Digital Officer, Sandi Villarreal
Director of Web and Digital Technology, Bob Sabath
Senior Associate Web Editor, Catherine Woodiwiss
Web and Multimedia Associate, JP Keenan
Audience Engagement Associate, Ryan Stewart

Chief Church Engagement Officer, Lisa Sharon Harper
Director of Advocacy and Communications, Michael Mershon
Immigration Campaign Associate, Ivone Guillen
Online Organizing Associate, Janelle Tupper
Women and Girls Campaign Director, Elaina Ramsey

Accountant, Brion Thomas
Intern Program Director, Elizabeth Denlinger Reaves
Office Manager, Simon Oh
Assistant to the President, J.K. Granberg-Michaelson
Executive Assistant, James Simpson

Interns: Caroline Barnett, *Editorial*; Alison Juyun Chang, *Executive*; Stephanie Clark, *Advertising*; Melanie Foust, *Donor Services*; Ryan Hammill, *Online*; Rick Herron, *Campaigns*; Leticia Trujillo, *Church Engagement*; Jess Tveit, *Circulation*; Patrick Walls, *Communications*; Olivia Whitener, *Editorial*

Contributing Editors: Diana Butler Bass, Daniel Berrigan, Melvin Bray, Walter Brueggemann, Majora Carter, Joan Chittister, Eugene Cho, Shane Claiborne, Danny Duncan Collum, Edwidge Danticat, Marie Dennis, John DiIulio, E.J. Dionne Jr., Valerie Elverton Dixon, Reta Halteman Finger, Wes Granberg-Michaelson, David P. Gushee, Adam Hamilton, Obery Hendricks, Gareth Higgins, Joel Hunter, Lynne Hybels, Daisy Khan, Anne Lamott, Bill McKibben, Brian McLaren, Donald Miller, Ched Myers, Eboo Patel, John Perkins, Samuel Rodriguez, Richard Rohr, Ron Sider, Barbara Brown Taylor, Cornel West, Lauren Winner, Valerie Weaver-Zercher, Tyler Wigg Stevenson, Bill Wylie-Kellermann

Contributing Writers: Onleilove Alston, Frida Berrigan, Michaela Bruzzese, Kimberly Burge, Judy Coode, David Cortright, Aaron McCarroll Gallegos, Bob Hulteen, Jesse Nathan, Brittany Shoot, Kari Jo Verhulst, Andrew Wilkes, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Tobias Winright

Sojourners magazine (ISSN 0364-2097) is published monthly, except September-October is combined, at 3333 14th St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20010. Periodicals Postage Paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Canadian Publications Sales Agreement #257494. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sojourners, PO Box 48, Congers, NY 10920-9856.

Sojourners Online: www.sojo.net • @sojourners
Get free email updates at sojo.net/email_subscription.

BY JIM WALLIS

Steps of Gratitude

I DIDN'T KNOW much about sepsis until it hit me out of the blue the Friday before Thanksgiving. After working late Thursday night, I woke up the next morning shivering and shaking, with my teeth rattling and full of pain; my left leg was swollen and fire-engine red.

I was immediately sent to the hospital and told frightening things about how dangerous a septic cellulitis infection can be. The ailment is random and can strike people of all ages; bacteria gets under the skin and spreads, and if it goes into the bloodstream, things can get dangerous indeed.

I am certainly not used to lying in a hospital with intravenous antibiotics being pumped into me day and night. Fortunately, thanks to my overall good health, I responded quickly to the antibiotics, resulting in a full recovery. I've often visited others in hospitals and been an advocate for patients in bureaucratic health-care systems, and this unexpected visit reminded me why that is so important. It is easy to feel alone in those systems and to lose your voice. I have always been impressed by nurses, who so often bring life, laughter, and even love to health systems that so easily block out such things, and some of my nurses were the delight of my lockdown hospital time.

I came home from the hospital feeling deep appreciation for all the blessings in my life.

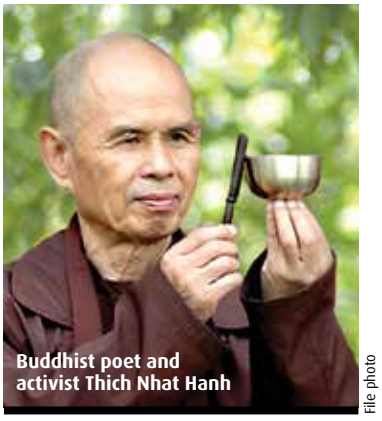
I grew close to my roommate in the hospital, a man who, like me, is married to an English woman, and who was clearly suffering from cardiac issues. The lack of privacy through flimsy curtains forced me to overhear a doctor telling him that he had two choices: a heart surgery that the doctor thought the man wouldn't survive, or hospice care with only six months or less to live.

Decisions about life and death often suddenly fill these hospital rooms. My leg infection quickly shrank in comparison, and being present to my roommate and his wife became very important. Friends coming by to talk to my roommate brought tears, stories, smiles, and fears.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE entering the hospital, I had gone on a much-needed personal retreat—not to lead but just to listen, learn, and be quiet. The topics of the seminar were "character" and "gratitude." The former was intriguing, as the subject of character always is to me. But I found the latter theme, gratitude, to be profoundly challenging—and restful at the same time. Gratitude is hard. It is especially hard for those of us who see their vocation as changing the world—seeing what is wrong and trying to make it right. We see the unjust things and want to make them just, the broken things and want to help heal them; we see the bad and want the good. It can be exhausting.

Our retreat leader talked about the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, a well-known poet and peace activist now living in France, who travels internationally and teaches meditation. We were taught his meditation of walking with steps of gratitude—each time one's feet touch the earth, the step is accompanied by a prayer of gratitude.

Then we were sent out to walk, to feel our feet touching the ground and to remember things we were grateful for. The first things were easy for me—my boys, Luke and Jack, my wife, Joy. My mom and dad and the rest of my family. Longtime friends and companions on this journey. The community at Sojourners that carries out our mission and the extended community around the country and the world that supports us and works with us in so many ways.



Buddhist poet and activist Thich Nhat Hanh

File photo

Then it began to grow. Instead of thinking of the many things wrong with the world, the things I want to change, I kept putting my mind and heart on the people and things for which I am grateful. It started to relax, settle, and focus me, as our retreat director said it would.

THEN I GOT sepsis a couple weeks later. In the midst of the pain, weakness, and fear, I remembered the things for which I am most grateful. I came home from the hospital two days before Thanksgiving feeling deep appreciation for all the blessings in my life.

More and more, I am coming to see how a regular meditation of gratitude for this world and for the people in it may well be the best way of preparing and sustaining me every day to work to change the things that still must be changed. It made me realize once again how grateful I am to all the people who keep our mission at Sojourners going, each and every day.

We have much further to go, but I am so thankful that we're on this journey together. ■

***Jim Wallis** is editor-in-chief of* Sojourners *magazine.*

Ryan Rodrick Beiler/LWF

A Waltz for the Earth

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, danced in celebration with Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of South Africa after receiving 1,780,528 signatures calling political leaders to take decisive action to curb climate change and help poor nations adapt. The signatures were presented by Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu faith leaders before the opening of the 2015 global climate change conference in Paris.

By Bob Smietana

'Syrian Refugees Welcome Here'

The mayor of Allentown, Pa., opens the town doors—but not without pushback.

LAST FALL, MAYORS of 18 U.S. cities sent a letter to President Obama, promising to welcome Syrian refugees with open arms. Atop the list was Ed Pawlowski, the mayor of Allentown, Pennsylvania's third largest city.

Pawlowski said his evangelical Christian faith—and America's founding ideals—shaped his decision. "We like to say that America was built on Judeo-Christian principles," he told *Sojourners*. "Then let's follow our Judeo-Christian principles, which tell us to welcome the stranger because we were once strangers ourselves." So far, about 10 Syrian refugee families have come to Allentown in the past year. More are expected.

There's been some pushback from older Syrian immigrants in the community. Allentown is home to about 5,000 Syrians, many of them Christians who fled persecution in the past. Most of the new arrivals are Muslim.

Aziz Wehbey, head of the local American Amarian Syrian Charity Society, told CBS News he had concerns about the background checks on the new arrivals. "We need to know who we are welcoming in our society," said Wehbey.

Another local Syrian charity, the Syrian Arab American Charity Association, has collected donations of food, furniture, and clothing for the refugees. So has St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, where many Syrian immigrants worship.

Pawlowksi has spent a great deal of time talking to residents about their fears, such as concerns that the area will become "overrun" with refugees. He stressed that only a few families are coming to Allentown. They've lost everything, the mayor said, and need help: "We can handle this."

IN A STATE where about 58,000 refugees have been resettled in recent decades, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry plans to continue welcoming newcomers, despite Gov. Bill Haslam petitioning the federal government to stop sending refugees to his state. The local World Relief office, which resettles 500 to 600 refugees each year, has organized churches to help Syrian refugees.

Saleh Sbenaty, who left Syria in the 1980s and now is a college professor and chair of the outreach committee at his local Islamic center, urged Tennesseans to continue to make refugees feel at home. "Yes, we need to ensure our country's security first," he wrote in an op-ed for the *Nashville Scene*, a local alterative newspaper. "But we also need to ease the suffering of these refugees. They are human beings, after all. None of them would stay here if they were given the chance to live in their own country without the fear of death, persecution, or torture."

The status of refugees has caused tension in other states. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed suit to block the arrival of three refugee families in early December. In Indiana, Gov. Mike Pence, who in the

past has championed religious freedom, asked Catholic leaders to halt their refugee resettlement efforts. Pence made a personal appeal to the Catholic Archbishop of Indianapolis, Joseph W. Tobin. Tobin disagreed. A refugee family arrived in Indianapolis in early December. "I informed the governor prior to the family's arrival that I had asked the staff of Catholic Charities to receive this husband, wife, and their two small children as planned," Tobin said in a statement.

For his part, Pawlowski said he can't change national policies about refugees. But he can make sure his city lives up to its principles. Those principles include a warm and compassionate welcome for refugees. "At the local level, we don't have control over whether refugees show up," he said. "Our responsibility is to say, we are going to welcome these folks ... For me and my city, we are going to try to live out what we believe." ■

__Bob Smietana__ is a religion writer and senior news editor for Christianity Today. *He lives in Nashville, Tenn.*

By Rachel Anderson

How to Practice Safe Banking

From churches to the FDIC, there's a new financial environment where responsible lending can flourish.

PAYDAY AND CAR-TITLE loans are marketed as a quick fix to help struggling families through a financial emergency. Advertised as "EZ Cash" and "24-7 Finance," the perils of payday loans, with exorbitant interest rates upward of 300 percent, trap households in long-term debt.

The Christian witness on lending encompasses both a prohibition against exploiting the poor with excessive interest as well as a call to steward God-given financial resources. The launch of a diverse Faith for Just Lending coalition in May challenging predatory payday lending, recent state campaigns seeking to cap the rate on payday loans, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's announcement to establish rules for payday, car-title, and high-cost installment loans all signal important public steps toward the first goal: stopping unscrupulous businesses from preying on those who are poor.

Now we must examine how to steward a financial environment where responsible lending will flourish. Many of the same groups who have opposed predatory lending are now addressing how to offer credit that empowers their neighbors rather than preys upon them. In Minnesota, Exodus Lending extends low-interest loans to help individuals pay off their payday loans. In Louisiana, the Church for the Highlands partnered with other churches and a local credit union to pay off loans when the borrower cannot. (So far, no one in the program has defaulted.) Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas hosts a loan repayment pool and invites clients into a peer mentoring relationship for financial counseling.

While churches and congregations offer a uniquely relational and holistic form of lending, other institutions can also play an important role. In Mississippi, the New Roots Credit Partnership helps employers offer low-cost loans through their payroll system. Texas' Community Loan Center of the Rio Grande Valley offers a similar program. Employer-based programs can offer a scale and an infrastructure that keep costs down.

Some have proposed converting the U.S. Postal Service into a postal bank to provide access to simple financial services, prepaid card services, and responsible small-dollar loans. Advocates see it as a "public option" for financial services built on the existing USPS physical infrastructure and repository of public trust, though it's an option that ultimately relies on partnership with traditional banks.

Banks and credit unions will continue to be critical players in the large-scale financial services market. They are also the ones largely to blame for gaps that exist in the small-dollar credit market. Rather than finding ways to help customers manage their cash flow and build up savings, banks lie in wait, benefitting when customers trip

sojourners

Our Mission
The mission of *Sojourners* magazine is to inspire hope and action by articulating the biblical call to racial and social justice, life and peace, and environmental stewardship.

Business and Editorial Address
Please send all business and editorial correspondence to Sojourners, 3333 14th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20010.

Subscription and Change of Address
SUBSCRIBERS: Visit sojo.net/subscribe to manage your subscription or print change of address on a card with old address label attached; send all subscription correspondence and address changes (except countries listed below) to Sojourners, PO Box 48, Congers, NY 10920-9856, call 1-800-678-9691, or email us at sojourners@cambeywest.com (allow six weeks to process any address change). POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sojourners, PO Box 48, Congers, NY 10920-9856.

Subscription Rates
U.S.: $39.95 one year print (for first-class mail, $50). Digital subscriptions to *Sojourners* are available for $19.95 (free to print subscribers) at sojo.net/subscribe. **Australia:** $78 one year (via air mail, paid in Australian currency, and sent to MediaCom, PO Box 610, Unley 5061 SA). **New Zealand:** $97 one year (via air mail, paid in New Zealand currency, and sent to MediaCom, PO Box 9483, Wellington, NZ); email admin@mediacom.org.au. **All other foreign surface** (six to eight weeks delivery overseas): $49.95 one year. **All other air service overseas** (one to two weeks delivery): $59.95 one year. Except where noted, payable in U.S. currency.

Newsstand Circulation
Newsstand circulation through Disticor Magazine Distribution Services. For more information, call (905) 619-6565, fax (905) 619-2903, or email mraucci@disticor.com.

Advertising
Advertisement in *Sojourners* does not imply editorial endorsement. For information on display advertising in *Sojourners,* please write to: Advertising, Sojourners, 3333 14th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20010; advertising@sojo.net; or visit www.sojo.net.

Submissions
Please direct poetry to the Poetry Editor (postal mail only, address below); and books, music, and reviews to the Review Editor by post or at reviews@sojo.net. No submissions will be returned.

Full writer's guidelines: sojo.net/writers.

Printed in the U.S.A. on recycled paper.

All content copyright ©2016 Sojourners
3333 14th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20010
Phone (202) 328-8842

From the Archives

February 1988

Down at the Cross

[JAMES BALDWIN] spoke the truth to us all and frightened many of us with such declarations as, "There is simply no possibility of a real change in the Negro's situation without the most radical and far-reaching changes in the American political and social structure." But he would not allow us to take the easy route of mesmerizing guilt or undemanding fear. For he was a child of the black church who had fought his own demon-possessed interior battles of the wilderness. So in his essay ["Down at the Cross"], Jimmy demanded that we hear him when he added to his socio-political challenge these words: "Whoever wishes to become a truly moral being ... must first divorce himself from all the prohibitions, crimes, and hypocrisies of the Christian church. If the concept of God has any validity or any use, it can only be to make us larger, freer, and more loving. If God cannot do this, then it is time we got rid of Him."

And, of course, many of us knew that with Jimmy it was never simply a matter of hurling such words into the darkness and retiring to his typewriter. We knew of his wrestling with the Divine. We had seen him too often on the edges of the Southern battlegrounds, moving in, taking his place in the marches, speaking words of inspiration to us, raising money for the cause—in other words, experiencing in a variety of ways what it meant to be "down at the cross." ■

***Vincent Harding** was a* Sojourners *contributing editor and a professor at Iliff School of Theology in Denver when this article appeared.*

up. Many banks and credit unions maximize their income through carefully designed overdraft programs, which account for about 60 percent of bank fee revenue. These banks assess $35 overdraft fees each time someone overdraws an account, essentially providing a high-cost form of credit that can cost households hundreds of dollars per year. For low-income households, especially those with uneven income and work hours, this amounts to one more poverty penalty.

One way to become involved in promoting better banking in your community is to join a local Bank On initiative. Bank On is a national catalyst for community-bank partnerships to engage more households in safe banking. Recently, Bank On secured the commitments from four major national banks to offer no-overdraft-fee checking accounts that provide a safer alternative for many customers.

Financial institutions such as Bank Plus in Mississippi provide moderate-interest small-dollar loans and loan-repayment models with incentives to save. Big banks can do this too. The FDIC has provided a model for affordable small-dollar credit that banks of any size can implement. It could be part of a suite of services banks use to improve relationships with low-to-moderate-income customers. More banks trading in their egregious overdraft programs for affordable small loans or innovative plans to encourage savings would provide families sound options for dealing with financial ups and downs.

We can view the ubiquity of fast-cash storefronts and growing online markets with despair, or we can recognize it as an opportunity to expand access by low-wage workers and households on a fixed income into a fairer banking system. ■

***Rachel Anderson** is director of faith affairs at the Center for Responsible Lending in Washington, D.C.*

By Michael Mershon

The State of the Dream

Tracking immigration reform in the U.S. courts and its impact on families.

IN NOVEMBER, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals blocked a series of Obama administration executive orders intended to shield millions of immigrants from deportation.

Of course, there's a backstory: After the 2014 failure of Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, President Obama attempted to create one program, called Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), and expand an existing one, called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

As its name suggests, DACA was created to protect children—more than 1.7 million, according to the Migration Policy Institute—who were brought to the United States before they turned 16. These "Dreamers" have become a visible and powerful political movement. DAPA is intended to provide work permits and exemption from deportation to those adults with children who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.

In the dangerous environment created by our failed immigration policy, these two protections are essential for keeping families safe and together.

But when the Obama administration announced these programs in November 2014, some states claimed that expanding the number of immigrants allowed to stay in the U.S. would cause an unfair increase in the cost of state services. Ultimately, 26 states sued to stop the DAPA/DACA changes. In November 2015, the Fifth Circuit—which covers Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas—found in favor of the states. The Justice Department then appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, which is likely to decide the case before a new president takes office.

Immigrant and family advocates, along with religious leaders, criticized the ruling. "After the Fifth Circuit's decision concerning DACA and DAPA, what remains abundantly clear is that the U.S. Congress needs to urgently address immigration reform," said Gabriel Salguero, president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition. "Hispanic Evangelicals are looking for

genuine leadership on this issue. No more delays and excuses."

Nineteen faith-based organizations (including Sojourners) filed an amicus brief with the Fifth Circuit Court to advocate alongside individuals seeking relief from deportation, and churches across the country had begun to prepare members to apply for DAPA and the expanded DACA.

BUT NO MATTER the final outcome of the court case, immigration will continue to play a major role in the 2016 campaign. Democratic presidential candidates have pledged to support and even extend the executive orders, while most Republicans have vowed to rescind them.

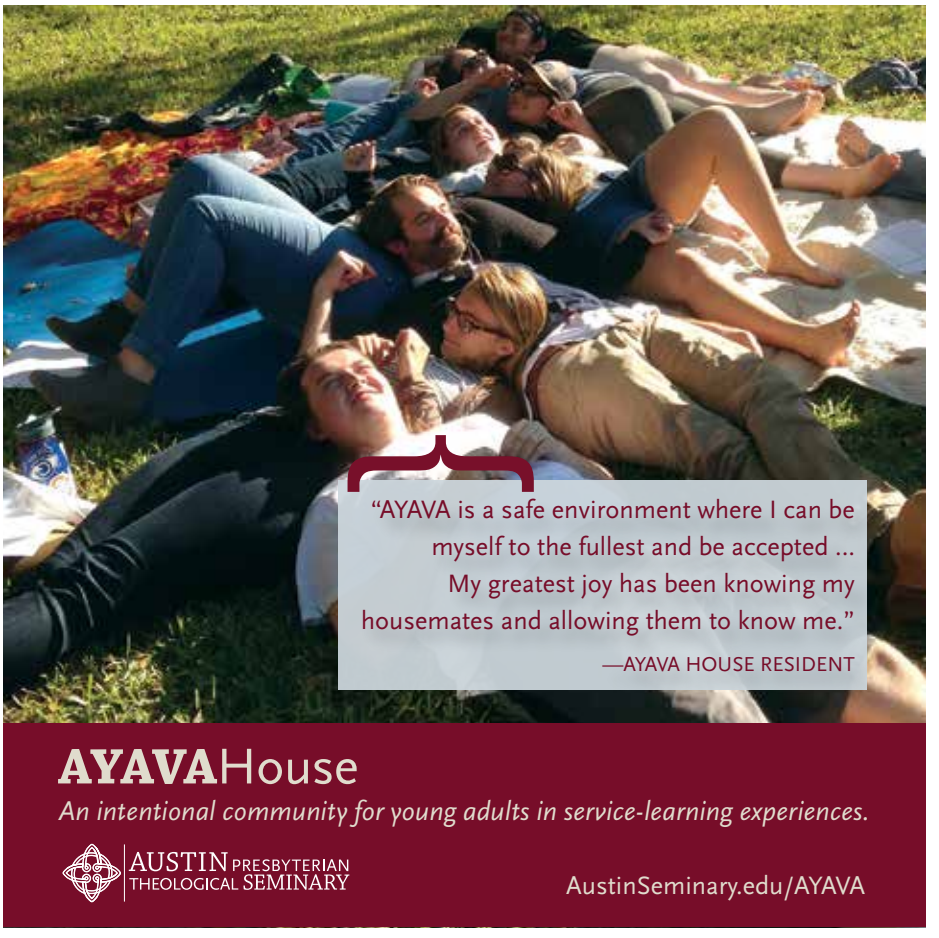
Demographic shifts in the country have resulted in an electorate that is more ethnically diverse than ever before. Indeed, a growing number of U.S. citizens—6.3 million, according to the Center for American Progress—live in households with relatives who would qualify for DAPA. By 2016, 1.5 million of those will be eligible voters, and by 2020 that figure will rise to 2.25 million, according to the report.

As Manuel Pastor, one of the report's authors, said: "When people think about DAPA, they think about the effects on the parents themselves—the undocumented immigrants—and what they forget is that those folks are embedded in families. It's important to remember that whatever affects undocumented folks actually touches people who are citizens and can vote."

Unfortunately, congressional leaders are in no hurry to address this issue. Newly elected Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has ruled out bringing comprehensive immigration reform to a vote as long as President Obama is in office—meaning January 2017 at the earliest. In the meantime, millions of families remain in limbo.

As Jesus Paredes, the father of one such family, told *The Washington Post*, "We have been desperately waiting for this, and we have all our documents ready to apply. Our children are on a solid path now, but we are still stuck and living with the same stress, every day." ■

***Michael Mershon** is Sojourners' director of advocacy and communications.*



BY LISA SHARON HARPER

Things Fall Apart

IF FACEBOOK feeds are any measure of anxiety levels, then we're reaching a new high. Friends' posts share news of overt hatred and violence, the likes of which we haven't seen in decades:

- A seemingly unending onslaught of police killings of unarmed black people.
- White supremacists shooting people as they pray, setting fire to churches, and shooting into crowds of multiethnic protesters.
- More than 1,000 mass shootings in the U.S. since the 2012 massacre of children at Sandy Hook.
- Millions of Syrian and African refugees flowing into Europe—the greatest movement of people across Europe since the Holocaust.
- The so-called Islamic State ushering in what looks to be a new world war.
- Oh, and the climate is changing at an alarming rate.

It feels like the world is unraveling.

But what if it is? What if we are, in fact, witnessing the end of the world as we know it? Would that be so bad?

Think about it. The world order, as we know it, rests on deep foundations built by worldwide colonization, imperialism, slavery, patriarchy, exploitation, and ecological consumption. Most of the violence listed above traces back to economic and social systems of dominance—one group over another or humanity's domination of the rest of creation. White supremacists feel threatened because people of color are finally rising up and saying "No more!"

> But now is the time to dream and plan and begin to build the world we want.

While 16 mass shootings occurred between 1995 and 2005, there were 38 from 2005 to 2015, according to a recent report by *Mother Jones*. In recent years, people have pushed against the gun lobby with all their might, but the NRA seemed invincible.

But following the San Bernardino shooting rampage, President Obama responded to years of grassroots advocacy and congressional stalemate by seeking a work-around, executive action to expand background checks and close gun-show loopholes.

Millions are fed up and want change—and as a result, eventually, the end of arms hegemony will come. The scales will tip and politicians will pay for their unconscionable consent to needless death and destruction.

If the world as we know it unraveled today, what would be lost? It depends on your vantage point: Over the past 40 years, our culture and politics have shifted. The culture has moved toward greater inclusion—even while some have embraced fringe ideologies and backed policies of exclusion.

Shutterstock

What would be lost? Those crushed by structures built upon foundations of imperialism, colonization, racism, misogyny, and economic caste might witness the unraveling as fulfilment of Isaiah 61 and Luke 4—the year of Jubilee, the year the chains finally fell off with a loud clank. And those who benefited from the status quo might have to face Jesus and decide if they really love the one who identifies with "the least of these."

Perhaps the unraveling isn't Armageddon. Perhaps it is the cross before the resurrection. Perhaps it will lead to redemption and the reformation of our society. Perhaps now, in the face of violence, destruction, and chaos—perhaps now is the time to dream and plan and begin to build the world we want. ■

Lisa Sharon Harper *(@lisasharper) is Sojourners' chief church engagement officer and author of* The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right *(June 2016).*

VISIT US

Tour our shrines

Pray in our church

Reflect in our gardens

Stay in our hermitage

Shop in our gift shop

SUPPORT US

Franciscans minister to Christians in the Holy Land

Donate to the Good Friday Collection

Subscribe to *The Holy Land Review*

Take a pilgrimage with the Franciscans

FRANCISCAN MONASTERY OF THE HOLY LAND

1400 Quincy Street N.E. Washington D.C. | www.MyFranciscan.org

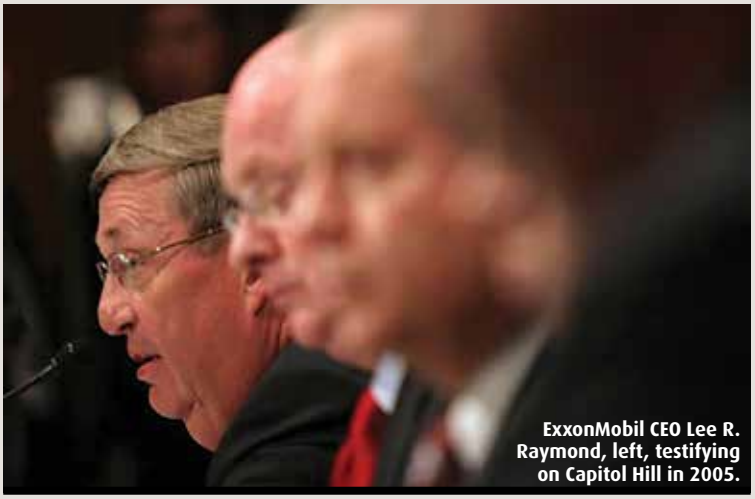
BY BILL McKIBBEN

Exxon's Criminal Offense

TWO RECENT news items: 1) A new U.N. report finds that over the last 20 years, 4.1 billion people have been injured in extreme weather events—the floods and forest fires that are proliferating as the climate warms. The report adds that the total will keep steeply climbing in the years ahead.

2) Two teams of investigative journalists, following separate document trails, proved in the course of the fall that Exxon—now ExxonMobil, the world's most profitable company—had known everything there was to know about climate change 25 years ago. And then lied about it, helping to set up the elaborate infrastructure of climate denial that has prevented serious international action on global warming.

I don't know how to keep these two things in my head at the same time without giving myself over to hatred. I know I'm not supposed to hate, and much of the time I'm able to work on climate change without losing my cool. I can meet oil industry executives, understand the problems that make it hard for them to move quickly; I can and do sympathize deeply with coal miners and tar sands miners whose lives will be disrupted as we take necessary action.



ExxonMobil CEO Lee R. Raymond, left, testifying on Capitol Hill in 2005.

Getty Images

The damage Exxon has done will keep on accelerating for centuries to come.

But for Exxon? There have been hours, reading these reports in the *Los Angeles Times* and the Pulitzer-winning InsideClimate News, when I've just found myself in a blind rage, unable to comprehend how people—professed Christians, most of them, in that Texas hotbed of Christianity—could act this way. Their scientists told them quite straightforwardly that burning coal and oil was heating the planet and that it was going to be disastrous. By the mid-1980s, before any politician was talking about climate change, they had good computer models indicating (correctly as it turned out) how much the earth would warm. And they believed those predictions—they helped guide their actions in places like the Arctic, where they were bidding for leases in waters they knew would soon be free of ice.

But they also knew that serious action on climate change would cost them money—would force them to start switching their business from fossil fuel to renewable energy. And so they went to work, helping to set up front groups that hired veterans of the tobacco wars to open a new front of obfuscation. Their CEO, Lee Raymond, gave a speech in Beijing in 1997 insisting that the climate models were hokum, and that the earth was cooling.

And it worked. The fossil-fuel-owned Congress, at Exxon's urging, blocked the Kyoto accords, and replaced them with ... nothing. Around the world, much the same story. And so climate change gathered steam. And so 4.1 billion people have been wounded, and trillions of dollars lost, and 600,000 killed in those extreme weather events. Some of them would have died anyway—there's always weather—but the damage Exxon has helped do will keep on accelerating for centuries to come.

All of us share some blame, for we used that energy, and wasted a fair amount of it. But most of us were not in the position to end the faux, phony, pretend debate over climate change with a single press conference. That's all it would have taken Exxon: one CEO saying "the scientists are right." At which point no climate denial could have taken root. At which point we would have gotten to work. We wouldn't have solved global warming, but we'd be on the way.

The authorities are investigating Exxon now, beginning with New York attorney general Eric Schneiderman. So I guess I can subcontract my rage to them. But given the stakes, this is a hard one. A horrible one. It raises question about good and evil that I don't really know how to even ask. ■

***Bill McKibben** is the Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College in Vermont and founder of 350.org.*

Master of Social Work

Department of Social Work ▪ BSW and MSW Programs

Justice ▪ Compassion ▪ Action

Azusa Pacific University's Master of Social Work program prepares you for a career dedicated to improving the lives of others in a variety of professional settings, locally and around the world.

- Full-time and part-time options
- Internships in the Greater Los Angeles area
- Integration of faith and social work practice
- Two specialized concentrations

Community Practice and Partnerships Concentration // Study international social work, global relief and development, community advocacy, organizational leadership, grant writing, and more.

Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families Concentration // Focus on clinical practice in hospitals, schools, mental health care, child welfare agencies, older adult services, shelters, group homes, corrections, and more.

Apply today!

Visit apu.edu/msw/, email kmaynard@apu.edu, or call (626) 857-2400.

901 E. Alosta Ave., Azusa, CA 91702

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

God First Since 1899

17770

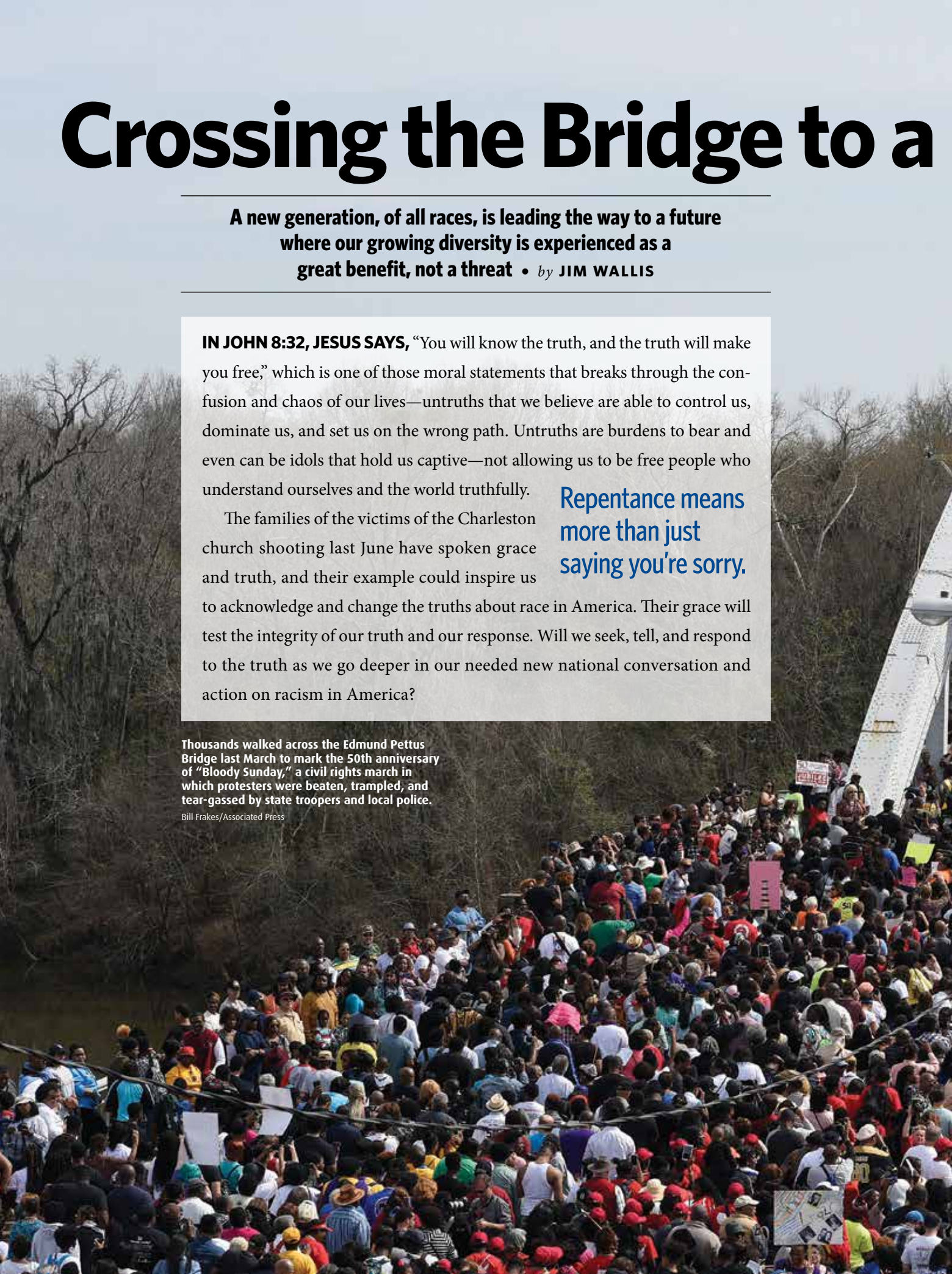
Crossing the Bridge to a

A new generation, of all races, is leading the way to a future where our growing diversity is experienced as a great benefit, not a threat • *by* **JIM WALLIS**

IN JOHN 8:32, JESUS SAYS, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free," which is one of those moral statements that breaks through the confusion and chaos of our lives—untruths that we believe are able to control us, dominate us, and set us on the wrong path. Untruths are burdens to bear and even can be idols that hold us captive—not allowing us to be free people who understand ourselves and the world truthfully.

Repentance means more than just saying you're sorry.

The families of the victims of the Charleston church shooting last June have spoken grace and truth, and their example could inspire us to acknowledge and change the truths about race in America. Their grace will test the integrity of our truth and our response. Will we seek, tell, and respond to the truth as we go deeper in our needed new national conversation and action on racism in America?



Thousands walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge last March to mark the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday," a civil rights march in which protesters were beaten, trampled, and tear-gassed by state troopers and local police.
Bill Frakes/Associated Press

New America

For example, we have seen and heard painful revelations about how police—and, even more systematically, the criminal justice system—too often mistreat young men and women of color. What happened in these incidents? And are they just "incidents," or is there a pattern here? Is there really just one criminal justice system for all of us—equally—or are there actually different systems for white Americans and for Americans of color?

Are we hiding behind untruths that help make us feel more comfortable, or are we willing to seek the truth, even if that is uncomfortable? The gospel text cited above is telling us that only by seeking the truth are we made *free*, and that hanging on to untruths can keep us *captive* to comfortable illusions.

And if the untruths are, more deeply, idols, they also separate us from God—which is, obviously, highly important for those of us who are people of faith.

If white Christians acted more Christian than white, black

America's foundation

The title of my new book, *America's Original Sin*, is itself unsettling and, for many, provocative. We first used the phrase in a 1987 cover story in *Sojourners* magazine. The language of "America's original sin" helped me understand that the historical racism against America's Indigenous people and enslaved Africans was indeed a *sin*, and one upon which this country was founded. This helps to explain a lot, because if we are able to recognize that the sin still lingers, we can better understand issues before us today and deal with them more deeply, honestly, and even spiritually—which is essential if we are to make progress toward real solutions.

New York City police commissioner William Bratton acknowledged at a church breakfast in 2014 the negative role of police against African Americans throughout American history. "Many of the worst parts of black history would have been impossible without police," Bratton said. You can imagine my surprise when he then used the language of original sin: "Slavery, our country's *original sin*, sat on a foundation codified by laws enforced by police, by slave-catchers." Bratton is no theologian or liberal academic but rather an experienced, knowledgeable, and tough cop. In fact, Bratton has been a controversial figure in New York, coming under fire for his "broken windows" policing strategy that focuses on aggressively targeting low-level offenses in order to deter more serious crime—a strategy that many say disproportionally affects people of color.

Bratton reminded fellow New Yorkers that the colonial founder of New York City, the Dutchman Peter Stuyvesant, was a supporter of the slavery system and created a police force to enforce and protect it. "Since then," said the commissioner, "the stories of police and black citizens have been intertwined again and again." He called the role of the NYPD sometimes "corrosive" in race relations. Bratton was talking about how the "original sin" has lingered in our criminal justice system, which is a reality that many people of color experience.

'What do they want?'

I agree with Commissioner Bratton that telling the truth about America's original sin is the best way to deal with it and ultimately be free of it. That makes moral and practical sense. Yet the truth of systemic injustice in the past and present must also compel us to action. It remains to be seen whether Bratton's acknowledgment of the historical issues translates into a commitment to real and ongoing reforms in how his police do their jobs.

I want to talk honestly about America's original sin and how it still lingers in our criminal justice system and too many other areas of American life. To treat these issues as sin—which can be repented of and changed—is a deeper, more effective way to solve these problems than just seeing them as political issues in an illusory "post-racial" America.

The painful and combustible connection between poverty, crime, and hopelessness is another of our lingering national sins. Joblessness leads to hopelessness; if we don't do a better job of educating *all* our children, they will struggle to find decent jobs, and without education and jobs it's very hard to build the strong families that all humans so critically need.

I am often puzzled by the question that some middle-class white people ask when they see protests about economic inequality and unequal criminal justice. The question, asked directly or indirectly, usually seems to be, "What do they want?" And the "they" always implies people of color.

The best answer I've heard lately to that question came from a young black man I met in Ferguson, Mo. He said, "What do I want? I want an education, a job, and a family." Well, that's what my two boys want, and that's what I want for them—it's what all parents want for their kids. And the undeniable fact is that those who are being left out without an education, a job, and a family are overwhelmingly people of color in America, black and Native Americans most of all—that's the strongest proof of the lingering power of America's original sin.

Recessions and recoveries come and go, while whole communities of people are left behind, never enjoying "recovery," in predominantly black and brown neighborhoods across the country. Law enforcement is then expected to control or at least contain the predictable outcomes of poverty's chaos, pain, anger, and hopelessness in those black and brown neighborhoods, while the rest of us evade our responsibility to end that poverty and hopelessness.

Our criminal justice system just can't control the results of such poverty, even when it militarizes to do so. Add to that mix the clear racial bias of too many police officers, departments, and cultures, and you get the explosive, deadly results that we have witnessed across the nation. These are more than merely social issues; these are spiritual issues that speak to the lingering and, yes, evil power of America's original sin. Sin can be repented of and changed, but only when we acknowledge it for what it is.

The privilege I can never escape

One of the most central lingering sins is white privilege. I am a white man in America, and I write as a white male, a white dad, and a white Christian. For most of my adult life, I lived in low-income neighborhoods that have been predominantly black. Confrontation with white racism in my childhood in Detroit and in white churches has been the primary converting experience in my own faith

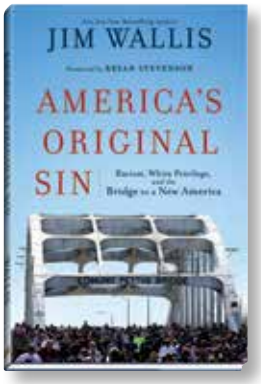
history. It set me on a path that has defined my understanding of faith ever since. Allies and companions in black churches and communities have been principal shapers of my direction and vocation.

But no matter where you go as a white person in American society, no matter where you live, no matter who your friends and allies are, and no matter what you do to help overcome racism, you can never escape white privilege in America if you are white. I benefit from white privilege (and male privilege as well) every single day, and I don't have any more say in that than black men and women who experience the opposite. What does white responsibility means, in the face of these benefits?

I believe truth-telling about America's original sin of racism must not be left to people of color alone. Crossing the bridge to a new America will be a multiracial task and vocation.

As I have talked with black friends, especially with black parents, the line that has elicited the most response is this one: "If white Christians acted more Christian than white, black parents would have less to fear for their children." Some of their reactions have been, "Are you really going to say that?" "Oh my, what are white Christians going to say about that?" "That's going to stir things up!" And, "You're going to need some of us to have your back on this one." Do I think white people and white Christians can hear this? I truly hope so. And if we can, I believe we might see a new day in our churches and help the nation move to a different kind of future.

Policing isn't the only issue we face, nor are the systemic reforms our criminal justice practices need. *America's Original Sin* is a primer on the underlying racism that still exists in America and that lies beneath the deep tensions related to the police killings that have recently refocused the nation's attention. We must look truthfully at underlying racial injustices, misunderstandings, and conflicts that continue to hold us back from being the country we can and should be. We must look at these crucial questions both structurally and spiritually. We must lift up the stories about how a new generation, of all races, is ready to deal with America's original sin in new and hopeful ways.



The truth will make you … defensive?

What will it take to develop a positive, hopeful, and forward-looking approach? We need to talk about what it means to "repent" of our original sin—and repentance means more than just saying you're sorry. It means turning in a new and better direction, which I believe we can do. We must look backward in order to look forward. We must each one make a spiritual claim: Our racial diversity and social pluralism are a great strength and a gift for our future, because our primary identity is as the children of God—all of us are created in God's image. Thinking about ourselves in that deeper way helps us to sort out a lot of things.

So what can the truth do for us?

You will know the truth, and the truth will make you *defensive*? I think we can do better than that. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you *dishonest*? I don't think we want to keep doing that. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you *deceptive*? We've seen way too much of that from public officials, and many people are now calling for accountability. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you *bitter*? That just makes us miserable, and miserable to live with. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you *angry*? Anger can be a positive thing, but only if it is channeled toward constructive change and gives us energy instead of hatred. We can eventually move beyond that too.

You will know the truth, and the truth will make you *free*. I truly believe that would be the best thing for all of us.

To become more *free* because of the truth. To become more *honest* because of the truth. To become more *responsible* because of the truth. To become *better neighbors* because of the truth. To become more *productive and contributing citizens* because of the truth. To become *better Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, people of other faiths, or people of conscience with no religion*—all better because of the truth. To become a *better and freer country for all of us* because of the truth.

And a big issue for me, as the father of two teenage boys, is how we can all become *better parents who are more supportive of other parents* because of the truth.

Finally, to *become better and freer human beings* because of the truth. I think that's what Jesus was getting at in the gospel passage.

The way forward

We can no longer be afraid of the truth about race in this country—past, present, and future—because our fears will keep us captive to all kinds of untruths. How do we find the truth together in these difficult, challenging, and complicated matters of race in America?

Martin Luther King Jr. titled his last book, released just months before we lost him, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* A new generation is answering that question for a new time.

I crossed the famous Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., on the 50th anniversary of the historic march that helped bring voting rights to all of our fellow citizens. It was then I realized that the answers to these questions will be found in crossing another bridge—the bridge to a new America that will soon be a majority of minorities.

We need to better understand the past so we can cross the bridge to a new, freer American future where our growing diversity is experienced as a great benefit and not as a great threat. I hope you will take up this invitation—to explore the truth of America's racial past, present, and hopeful future so that, together, we might all become more free, our congregations more faithful, and the state of our union "more perfect."

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. ■

parents would have less to fear for their children.

***Jim Wallis** is editor-in-chief of* Sojourners. *Adapted with permission from his forthcoming book* America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America *(Brazos Press, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016).*

USFWC photo

The worker cooperative movement is growing across the U.S. Above, employee-owners rally in New York City in 2014 to support funding for cooperative development.

Economic Democracy

Is socialism, like the communism of old, fundamentally inconsistent with Christian faith? • *by* **DANNY DUNCAN COLLUM**

"**WE NEED TO** overthrow ... this rotten, decadent, putrid industrial capitalist system."

So wrote Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker co-founder whom Pope Francis recently held up to the U.S. Congress as a great exemplar of the American spirit.

In the centuries since the rise of capitalism, millions of Christians, like Day, have sought not only to bind up the wounds of the poor, but also to create a world in which people will not be impoverished by low wages, unemployment, discrimination, or plain bad luck. Day ended up advocating a sort of communitarian anarchism. But for many other Christians—from Mother Jones to Dom Hélder Câmara to Martin Luther King Jr.—the name for that alternate system has been "socialism." And, after long decades during which acceptance of the existing economic order seemed inevitable, in 2016 the question of socialism is not only on the agenda again but, in the Democratic presidential primaries, on the ballot.

This is especially surprising because any alternative to corporate capitalism was widely declared dead after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, which had called itself a socialist state and imposed its rule by force. Its failure, in the end largely economic, was rightly seen to discredit the Marxist-Leninist version of socialism that relied on centralized, coercive state power to manage the lives of its citizens. In the wake of the collapse, the West flooded the formerly communist states with free-market economic gurus to guide a sort of capitalist extreme makeover, and the end of history was declared.

But then global capitalism had its own collapse in 2008. In the U.S., the dream of upward mobility is dying. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, since 1973 the inflation-adjusted average hourly earnings for workers with a high school degree or less

have declined; more-educated workers have barely stayed even. Meanwhile, according to the Economic Policy Institute, the inflation-adjusted income of the top 1 percent has risen 138 percent since 1979. A generation has arisen that sees its prospects declining. For this generation, "socialism" has little to do with the Soviet Union; it's just another insult that Fox News hurls at the president most of them supported.

So for the first time in 100 years, a democratic socialist, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, is waging a serious U.S. presidential campaign. Since his campaign began, the percentage of Americans who say they are willing to vote for a socialist has risen. In fact, for the past five years, U.S. public opinion polls have shown increasingly favorable associations with the word "socialism." Among millennials, the S-word's positives are now higher than its negatives.

Even in the Catholic Church, consideration of socialist alternatives no longer seems taboo. Since the days of Pope John Paul II, liberation theology has been on the outs in Rome, but last year Gustavo Gutierrez, who gave the movement its name with his 1971 book, *A Theology of Liberation*, was welcomed to the Vatican to address a conference. This is the same man who famously proclaimed that Christian theology needs to speak "of social revolution, not reform; of liberation, not development; of socialism, not modernization of the prevailing system."

What does socialism mean in 2016?

But the question remains: What does socialism mean in 2016? Is it one possible way for Christians to give systematic expression to the priority of the poor and the primacy of the common good? Or is it, like the communism of old, fundamentally inconsistent with Christian faith?

Many Americans still think of socialism as defined by state ownership of the means of production. But for decades, democratic socialists have mostly sought to increase economic equality, social justice, and worker power within the context of mixed economies that include privately owned enterprises. The Socialist International, an organization of most of the world's democratic socialist parties and movements, has in its declaration of principles this core idea: "The concentration of economic power in few private hands must be replaced by a different order in which each person is entitled—as citizen, consumer, or wage-earner—to influence the direction and distribution of production, the shaping of the means of production, and the conditions of working life." This "social control of the economy," the statement continues, "can be achieved through a wide range of economic means according to time and place."

> Early church leaders assumed that the goods of the earth belonged to all.

In the U.S., democratic socialists mostly want to start with instituting the basic public goods that their European peers won in the 20th century, including a national health system, tuition-free post-secondary education, a guaranteed minimum income, paid leave for the parents of young children, and massive direct public infrastructure investment. Beyond that, they talk about extending U.S. democracy into economic life through various kinds of cooperative enterprises.

Gary Dorrien is the Reinhold Neibuhr

and the Common Good

Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and a contributing editor for *Religious Socialism*, an online journal sponsored by the Democratic Socialists of America. Dorrien says that his idea of economic democracy "would feature mixed forms of worker, community, and mutual fund or public bank enterprises. It is about democratizing economic power, abolishing poverty, and creating environmentally sustainable economies." Dorrien acknowledges, "There is also a role for old-fashioned, large-scale, publicly controlled companies in certain areas. Most of the world's economic powers have them." But he also points to the Mondragon network of worker-owned cooperatives, based in the Basque country of Spain, as one of the more likely models for a better future.

"Mondragon employs over 100,000 workers," Dorrien says, "in more than 125 companies in virtually every economic sector, including robots and mass transit ... Each Mondragon worker/owner holds one share of voting stock, and profits are distributed in the form of additions to a capital account on which 6 percent interest is paid annually." Mondragon's top executives can't make more than six times the salary of the lowest paid worker. In the U.S. last year, that ratio averaged 373 to one.

Socialism before Marx

The Mondragon network was co-founded in 1956 by José María Arizmendiarrieta, a Jesuit priest, and it represents the kind of economics that Catholic social teaching has advocated for more than a century. Ever since Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, the church has criticized the inhumane aspects of capitalism and called for alternatives oriented toward the centrality of workers, families, and communities.

Unfortunately, *Rerum Novarum* also muddied the waters for decades to come with its unequivocal condemnation of "socialism," making no distinction between democratic socialists, many of them Christian, and atheistic Marxists. This confusion persisted throughout the 20th century. However, in 2006 Pope Benedict XVI published an essay ("Europe and Its Discontents") in which he acknowledged, "In many respects, democratic socialism was and is close to Catholic social doctrine and has in any case made a remarkable contribution to the formation of a social consciousness."

In his 1988 landmark work *Christian Socialism*, the late John Cort, a former Catholic Worker, traced the Judeo-Christian roots of socialist thinking back to the biblical Jubilee year in which debts were to be forgiven, slaves freed, and land returned to its original owners. In their concern for the poor, Cort wrote, "Jews of the Old Testament did not stop short at personal exhortation ... They enacted and enforced legislation ... They dealt with causes."

The early church fathers and mothers, Cort points out, assumed that the goods of the earth belonged to all. Private ownership was simply a temporal arrangement, to be honored so long as it didn't offend the demands of justice. As St. John Chrysostom put it, "Do not say, 'I am using what belongs to me.' You are using what belongs to others. All the wealth of the world belongs to you and to the others in common, as the sun, air, earth, and all the rest."

This continues to be Catholic teaching, most recently reiterated by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* when, quoting Pope John Paul II, he wrote, "God gave the Earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone ... the church does indeed defend the legitimate right to private property, but she also teaches no less clearly that there is always a social mortgage on all private property, in order that goods may serve the general purpose that God gave them."

When capitalism arose, with its notions of inviolable rights to individual ownership, Christians formed by this older tradition inevitably began to seek more just and humane alternatives. In Cort's telling, this is how the socialist movement began. And, he emphasizes, this "pre-Marxian" socialism called for worker ownership of the means of production, not state control, as the best way to enact justice and defend human rights. Post-Marxian socialism, it seems, is coming full circle.

The 'least grotesque' analogy available

Still, many Christians, even some who may seek a radical transformation of the existing economy, shy away from the socialist label. In 2013, members of Britain's Christian Socialist Movement, an influential organization aligned with the Labor Party, voted to change their name to "Christians on the Left." Leadership feared that the "socialist" label carried "less contemporary resonance."

Of course, many other Christians believe that capitalism doesn't need replacing at all. In a column for *The New York Times,* Catholic

Continued on Page 24

"Pre-Marxian" socialism called for worker ownership of the means of production, not state control, as the best way to enact justice and defend human rights.

Another Way is Possible

Andrew Wilkes *is an African Methodist Episcopal minister who serves on the editorial board of Democratic Socialists of America's online journal, Religious Socialism. Danny Duncan Collum interviewed him in October 2015.*

Sojourners: Why have you chosen to identify yourself as a socialist?

Andrew Wilkes: What began to change my thoughts is when I realized that another way of organizing land, labor, and capital is possible and was already happening locally, regionally, and in some respects nationally. Gar Alperovitz's book *What Must We Then Do?*, John Nichols' book *The "S" Word*, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s witness of a black social gospel and democratic socialism all proved seminal to me.

What does it mean to you to call yourself a socialist? Socialism, on a basic level, prioritizes human rights over property rights and our obligations to one another over conventions about the natural, efficient operations of markets. Socialism means a way of making decisions about the use of resources that seeks to end preventable human misery more than turning an ever-increasing profit. It's an ethical vision that also entails shared sacrifice for mutual gain—for instance, paying more in taxes to support health care, education, and other services that are free at the point of access.

I do not take socialism to mean the complete abolition of private property, contracts between individual parties, or the utter erasure of markets. Instead, socialism for me means the ascendancy of meeting human needs through public provision, cooperative ownership, and private businesses that include collective bargaining and government regulation. It also means that working individuals who produce goods and services have a significant say in shaping, owning, and influencing the institutions that shape their day-to-day quality of life.

How do you see those ideas relating to your Christian identity and Christian ministry? I joined the Religious Socialists of DSA (Democratic Socialists of America) to find an institutional outlet for my political commitments. I think it's inaccurate to suggest that the Bible can be marshaled in direct support of socialism. I do think that every Christian has to inquire about the society that best represents or foreshadows the dreams and desires of God for humanity. For me, the kind of socialism I've just described is the best society.

Being a Christian socialist also means pointing out how capitalism misshapes our loves and desires for possessions. At the consumer level, capitalism often looks like forgetting Jesus' teaching that life consists of more than the abundance of things and that we ought to be on guard against all kinds of greed.

Do you see potential for the idea of socialism, as you conceive it, to get any serious traction among African Americans? Yes, I do. I think it's important to note that Martin Luther King Jr., Pauli Murray, bell hooks, and many other notable African-American Christians, lay and clergy, have all espoused socialism. Bayard Rustin and A. Phillip Randolph created or sustained viable, mainstream institutions that put forth socialist viewpoints. It's important to build on the foundation that already exists.

I'm cool with the fact that some folks of color and white folks aren't supportive of a socialist project. I don't denigrate motives because of differing theories of change. However, I'm no longer airbrushing what I consider to be a fundamental problem in American life and the organization of our world economy. There is a Pauline ideal and a religious obligation to keep our conscience clean, which means to fight for what's right regardless of whether it can be realized entirely in this generation or the next. ■

SOJOURNERS INTERNS

ADVOCACY. POLICY. ORGANIZING.
MEDIA. DEVELOPMENT. WRITE.
VOLUNTEER. MARKETING. SALES.
ADMINISTRATION. LEARN.
EDIT. ADVERTISING. WORK.
GROW. CHANGE.

There is more than one way to serve God.

FIND YOURS.

Sojourners Interns 2015-16

Every fall a new group of women and men join the ministry of Sojourners in Washington, D.C. For a year they work together, live together, and grow together. And their lives are changed. **They are Sojourners interns.**

Join us in 2016!

Applications available at www.sojo.net/interns or by calling 1-800-714-7474. Application deadline for the 2016-17 intern year is **March 1, 2016.**

sojourners
www.sojo.net

Continued from Page 22

lay theologian Michael Novak recently wrote, "No other [system] has so quickly lifted the world out of poverty, grasped the need for freedom and creativity, and valued sacrifice for the future." He continued, "Capitalism is the most moral of a bad lot of economic systems known to humans."

Scott Rae, a professor of Christian ethics at Biola University's Talbot School of Theology, goes further, saying in an interview on epsociety.org, "the entrepreneurial traits necessary for success in economic life are actually important Christian virtues ... [and] the responsible wealth creation of the market system is how an economist would capture the biblical notion of human dominion over creation."

Christian defenders of capitalism universally acknowledge that free enterprise must be subject to moral restraints, and that basic provisions must be made for the poor. In that same interview, Rae admitted, "I believe ... that the rich can get richer without it being at the expense of the poor. But I am troubled by the increasing gap between rich and poor and worry about what that might do to social stability if that's a long-term trend."

Ultimately, the question for Christians may be whether the common good is better served by continuing to attempt to regulate and reform a system built on the private accumulation of wealth, with all its temptations, or by attempting to build new institutions in which, as the other Catholic Worker founder, Peter Maurin, put it, "It is easier for [people] to be good."

Andrew Wilkes is one Christian whose faith journey has led him to democratic socialism (see "Another Way is Possible," page 23). Wilkes is an African Methodist Episcopal minister and executive director of the Drum Major Institute, a think tank and community action organization co-founded by Martin Luther King Jr.

Wilkes says, "All societies are analogies of the beloved community, shadows of the ideal society that will result when God brings to completion the work of creation. I don't believe that we can legislate this society into being. I think instead that we create the most equitable society achievable and the most loving relationships possible on a communal, individual, and familial level. My sense is that a socialist society is the least grotesque analogy of the beloved community available to us in our time." ■

Danny Duncan Collum, *a* Sojourners *contributing editor, teaches writing at Kentucky State University in Frankfort.*

CREATING A DIFFERENCE FOR THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

†

CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

MDiv in Interfaith Chaplaincy

MDiv now hybrid/online

Twitter: @CST_News Instagram: @CST_News Facebook: /ClaremontTheology YouTube: /ClaremontTheology Flickr: /ClaremontTheology

admission@cst.edu (909) 447-2507 1325 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711 www.cst.edu

ON Scripture™

– *The Bible*

A weekly multimedia resource that provides insight into key issues of the day through a unique combination of Scripture, video and excellent biblical commentary.

Check out the all NEW ON Scripture - The Bible™ website at

www.onscripture.com

facebook.com/onscripture @onscripture @onscripture

The blues is the backbeat of American music and the foundation of black preaching.

The Blue Note GOSPEL

To be prophetic preachers, we must understand the blues.

by **OTIS MOSS III**

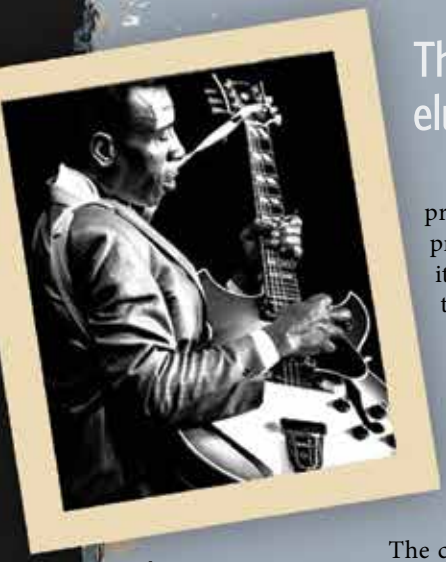
IF WE ARE TO RECLAIM the best of the preaching tradition, then we must learn what I call the blue note gospel. Before you get to your resurrection shout, you must pass by the challenge and pain called Calvary.

What is this thing called the *blues*? It is the roux of black speech, the backbeat of American music, and the foundation of black preaching. Blues is the curve of the Mississippi, the ghost of the South, the hypocrisy of the North. Blues is the beauty of bebop, the soul of gospel, and the pain of hip-hop.

Before we can speak of the jazz mosaic or the hip-hop vibe for postmodern preaching, we must wrestle with the blues. In his song "Call It Stormy Monday," T-Bone Walker laments how bad and sad each day of the week is, but "Sunday I go to church, then I kneel down and pray."

Walker's song unintentionally lifted up the challenge that the blues placed before the church and that black religiosity still seeks to solve. "Stormy Monday" forces the listener to reject traditional notions of sacred and secular. The pain of the week is connected to the sacred service of Sunday. There is no strict line of demarcation between the existential weariness of a disenfranchised person of color and the sacred disciplines of prayer, worship, and service to humanity.

Shutterstock images



Blues guitarist T-Bone Walker

The prophet is altered by the weight of the heavy, elusive nature of the word she or he carries.

This blue note is a challenge to preaching and to the church. Can preaching recover a blues sensibility and dare speak with authority in the midst of tragedy? America is living stormy Monday, but the pulpit is preaching happy Sunday. The world is experiencing the blues, and pulpiteers are dispensing excessive doses of non-prescribed prosaic sermons with severe ecclesiastical and theological side effects.

The church is becoming a place where Christianity is nothing more than capitalism in drag. In his book *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?* Marvin McMickle, president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, asks what happened to the prophetic wing of the church. Why have we emphasized a personal ethic congruent with current structures and not a public theology steeped in struggle and weeping informed by the blues? McMickle's book is instructive for us. He demonstrates the focus on praise (or the neo-charismatic movements) coupled with false patriotism—enhanced by the reactionary development of the tea party, the election of President Barack Obama, and personal enrichment preaching (neo-religious capitalism informed by the market, masquerading as ministry).

The blues has faded from the Afro-Christian tradition, and the tradition is now lost in the clamor of material blessings, success without work, prayer without public concern, and preaching without burdens. The blues sensibility, not just in preaching but inherent in American culture, must be recovered. We must regain the literary sensibility of Flannery O'Connor, Zora Neale Hurston, Ernest Hemingway, and James Baldwin; the prophetic speech of Martin Luther King Jr., William Sloane Coffin, and Ella Baker; along with the powerful cultural critique of Jarena Lee and Dorothee Sölle.

The blues, one of America's unique and enduring art forms, created by people kissed by nature's sun and rooted in the religious and cultural motifs of West Africa, must be recovered. The roots are African, but the compositions were forged in the humid Southern landscape of cypress and magnolia trees mingling with Spanish moss. It is more than music. The blues is a cultural legacy that dares to see the American landscape from the viewpoint of the underside.

Ralph Ellison, the literary maven and cultural critic, states, "The blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness. ... As a form, the blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically."

My muse for understanding the blues is rooted in two organic theologians and non-traditional homileticians, August Wilson and Zora Neale Hurston. This may sound strange. We are used to names rooted in the theological canon and given the stamp of approval by an elusive and sometimes mythical cabal of men whom we have never met, who give legitimacy to our thought. Both Wilson and Hurston capture the essence of blues speech and are chroniclers of black religiosity and the healing power of God-talk, articulated by people who preach and sing in minor keys.

The antidote to the blues

August Wilson is arguably America's most celebrated contemporary playwright, having created a cycle of 10 plays, one for each decade of the 20th century. Wilson's work is written with an overt blues sensibility. He believed blues speech, carried by his characters and embodied by actors, has the power to save. For Wilson, speech wrapped up in the blues is the antidote to the blues. The only way to get rid of your blues is to speak to your blues. His character Ma Rainey, based on the real life blues singer Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, speaks of the blues' prophetic power to release the individual from spiritual isolation:

The blues help you get out of bed in the morning. You get up knowing you ain't alone. There's something else in the world. Something's been added by that song. This be an empty world without the blues. I take that emptiness and try to fill it up with something.

Ma Rainey becomes a prophetic preacher with a deep blues sensibility. She is not seeking tragedy, but with a womanist vibe and a blues sensibility she is stating, "I refuse to fall into despair."

Through Wilson, I learned, and the preacher learns, a new definition of preaching. Here it is: Blue note preaching, or preaching with blues sensibilities, is prophetic preaching—preaching about tragedy, but refusing to fall into despair. That is blues preaching. "And they could not distinguish between the gospel shout and the blues moan" (my version of Ezra 3:13).

All of Wilson's plays create and envision a world that royal speech, status quo speech, supremacist speech, cannot imagine. In this world, autonomous, artistic women control their destinies, as in the person of Ma Rainey. In this world, a mentally ill man, such as the character Gabriel in *Fences*, demonstrates that he may be the angelic messenger of God, disguised in mental illness.

Blues singer Ma Rainey

The preacher's call

It is through August Wilson that I am pulled into the world of the blues, and through Zora Neale Hurston that I find the power of prophetic conjuring. Hurston, Harlem Renaissance writer, folklorist, and novelist, spent her life recording the blues speech and patterns of displaced Africans. Her body of work dares to claim that people of African descent do not need external cultural validation; they have a rich culture, whether or not it is acknowledged by Western scholars.

Hurston takes the speech of Southern storytellers, preachers, and singers and peppers her fictional work with the wisdom gathered from these people, creating a rich tapestry of speech where blues sensibilities and call-and-response moments are the norm. Hurston's famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* gives a theological perspective informed by her blues sensibility. The main character of the novel, Janie, who has taken hold of her destiny by marrying the much younger Teacake, seeks to find her place in the world. In one stunning section, Janie and Teacake take refuge from a hurricane and Hurston's blues theology emerges:

The wind came back with triple fury and put out the light for the last time. They sat in company with the others and other shanties, their eyes straining against crude walls and their souls asking if He meant to measure their puny might against His. They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God.

The preacher's call is to stand through storms after all the lights have gone out and the tourists have left the land. The call of the preacher is to stare in the darkness and speak the blues with authority and witness the work of God in darkness and even in the abyss. Blues speech and blues theology change the gaze of the preacher.

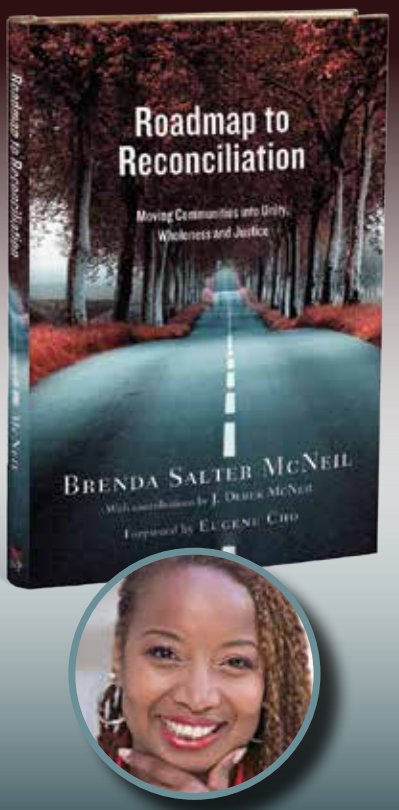
The blues is more than renaming of existential darkness; it is a way of seeing, a strategy of knowing, and a technique to empower.

All about our troubles

Jesus is central to blue note preaching. Howard Thurman speaks of how we must view Jesus as the liberator of the disinherited. In his classic text *Jesus and the Disinherited*, he speaks of Jesus as savior and liberator of those who have their backs against the wall. Scholar Obery Hendricks borrows from Thurman and expands our understanding of Jesus. In his powerful book *The Politics of Jesus*, Hendricks makes the

Begin the Journey Toward Peace

TODAY



"Brenda Salter McNeil is a legend. She's one of the church's greatest thinkers on one of the world's greatest challenges—reconciliation. Fifty years ago Dr. King lamented that the most segregated hour in the world is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning. Here is Dr. Salter McNeil's plan to change that."

—SHANE CLAIBORNE,
author, speaker, activist

IVP Books
Church. Culture. Mission.

IVPRESS.COM/ROADMAP

EMORY
CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Atlanta, Georgia

Candler prepares real people to make a real difference in the real world.

Now accepting applications for all 17 degree programs, including our newest, a dual Master of Divinity/Master of Social Work. Explore the possibilities at **candler.emory.edu** or email **candleradmissions@emory.edu**. Final deadlines for fall 2016:

- **March 1**: Doctor of Ministry
- **July 15**: Master of Divinity, Master of Religious Leadership, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Theology, Master of Religion and Public Life

Real

Real people. Real difference. Real world.

shininglight ministries

PERFORMING ARTS MEETS SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Now accepting applications for June 2016 Tour

shining-light.com

ACTION SUMMIT

Restoring Justice in the City

May 20–21, 2016

Baptist World Center
Nashville, TN

Sponsored by:
Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership • Vanderbilt Divinity School • Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies • American Baptist College

vu.edu/actionsummit

compelling argument that we should view Jesus not solely as the sociological savior of oppressed people; rather, our normative view of Jesus must be of a person who lived life as a colonized individual. Jesus understands the pain of terrorism and is acquainted with the structures of disenfranchisement that rob people of their humanity.

In other words, Jesus knows all about our troubles.

The preached word, when played, performed, and preached with the blue note sensibility, has the audacity to reclaim Jesus as savior and liberator of marginalized people. The God of the blue note empowers men and women and refuses to be categorized by puny, inadequate definitions created by humans and concretized to and by the academy. It is the role of the prophet/preacher to harness a portion of this divine energy.

In preaching, we unlock the gates of the prison with a word the world cannot comprehend.

The prophet seeks to paint a new world with the toolkit of oral performance, imagination, and keen intellectual investigation. In the process of painting this new world, the prophet is altered by the weight of the heavy, elusive nature of the word she or he carries. We cannot help but be bruised and blessed by the weight of the sacred task before us. The word is so heavy that it leaves marks upon our shoulders, just as bruises were left upon the Israelites who carried the ark across the desert of Canaan. The word cuts and leaves scars upon our body, fissures in our minds, as we seek to handle what cannot truly be handled.

Blue note preaching is a way of knowing. We refuse to turn away from the beauty in the ashes; neither shall we turn from the ashes that were once a bouquet of beauty: *I am African, I am black, I am woman, I am displaced; yet I pull from my sacred toolkit a palette of colors capable of beautifying the decaying walls of my prison.* In the process of preaching, we unlock the gates of the prison with a word the world cannot comprehend. ■

Otis Moss III *is senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. This article is adapted with permission from his book* Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair, *published by Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.*

Commit to courageous Christianity.

Mix it up for ecological and social justice.

Empower the church, the neighborhood, the city, the world.

DREW
drew.edu/sojourners

SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH A FAITHFUL LENS?

Come to Washington, DC for a 2-3 day tailor-designed seminar!

To learn more, visit umc-gbcs.org/um-seminars or email seminars@umc-gbcs.org

'We set out to start a community, and now we have a village'

Ten years after the release of his best-selling book *Irresistible Revolution*, Shane Claiborne talks with Jim Wallis about nonconformity, ending the death penalty, and cutting his hair.

A SELF-PROCLAIMED "ordinary radical" from eastern Tennessee, Shane Claiborne is a founding member of the New Monasticism movement, which encourages a life of simplicity, nonviolence, community, and prayer. In 1997, along with fellow passionate friends from Eastern University, Shane co-founded The Simple Way—an intentional Christian community in inner-city North Philadelphia. His books include *Jesus for President, Red Letter Revolution, Common Prayer,* and *Becoming the Answer to Our Prayers*. He's been featured in films such as *Another World is Possible* and *Ordinary Radicals*. His forthcoming book, *Executing Grace*, calls Christians to advocate for the abolishment of the death penalty.

Shane's first book, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical,* quickly became a foundational text for many young, social justice-minded Christians. Now, 10 years later, he's updating the world about what this revolution looks like today. Claiborne spoke with *Sojourners* editor-in-chief Jim Wallis by phone in November about what's new—and what's not—in his lifelong vocation to be part of the Jesus revolution.

JIM WALLIS: This is the 10th anniversary of the publication of *Irresistible Revolution*, and you've just released an updated edition. What new insights can we expect in this version?

SHANE CLAIBORNE: After 20 years of living in North Philly, there are things you look back on and you think, wow, that looks different from what I thought it would. So it's been a surprise and a gift to get to tweak the book a little bit. I wrote notes in the margins throughout the book. Some of them are fun and some of them are to be a little bit more accurate. Then I did a whole section of frequently asked questions. Those run the gambit of "How come you got married?" to "What do you do with ISIS?" I added an appendix, too, about the tradition of civil disobedience in the church. It was fun!

"The irresistible revolution," you said in the first edition of the book, "isn't just about going to heaven when you die, but bringing heaven down as you live. ... The revolution we are talking about begins inside each of us and extends to the ends

Red Letter Christians photos

of the earth." Has that changed? No, I don't think that has changed at all. What does change are the ways we live that out. When we started The Simple Way 20 years ago, there was the sense that everybody needs to leave everything behind and just live on the streets. What we've seen the Spirit doing is much more dynamic and spectacular than that—people are living out unique vocations. We have lawyers, doctors, plumbers, gardeners, or urban farmers—folks who are using their gifts for seeking first the kingdom of God and interrupting the patterns of injustice.

We are called to "not conform to the patterns of the world." But nonconformity doesn't mean uniformity. It doesn't mean we're all going to do the same thing. I'm really grateful for that. I tell a lot of those

Nonconformity doesn't mean uniformity.

new stories of what we've seen happen over the last 10 years in the new edition.

How have your thoughts changed about Christian community? The Simple Way looks different now from the way it did 20 years ago. We moved in with a bunch of wild 20-year-olds into a row house, and that was beautiful when we were 20. Now we have a dozen houses on the same block, and we've got a little bit of elbow room. The exact form of community looks different, but I think the spirit is still the same.

We don't want to be a community *in* the neighborhood; we want to be a community *with* the neighborhood. And we've been building that together. So now almost all the programs here at The Simple Way are run by people who have been here longer than I have. They're indigenous folks from the neighborhood. The ones giving out food bags are people who received food bags. The young people who are leading some of our educational stuff are kids who grew up on the block and now are graduating from schools such as Eastern University.

I sometimes say that we set out to start a community and now we have a village. And, really, we do. We've got community gardens everywhere, and murals. That's one

Shane Claiborne, circa 2012.

of the things we've seen after 20 years in this neighborhood: We have real, authentic friendships, where we're not just giving out food. I have neighbors that invite me over almost every night for dinner, and we've got so much happening now that we're building it together. There's a lot of pride in the neighborhood.

You also got married. How has that changed your life in community? The great thing is we get to do Jesus' work with our best friends. It's funny: Sometimes people think that [getting married] caused me to compromise a lot of my radical ideas. But one of the first things my wife, Katie, said to me was, "We make too much money—we've got to simplify." And Katie doesn't believe in television; I've never had a TV. She also doesn't believe in air conditioning or microwaves. So I had to simplify even further. We have a blast! I'm delighted to have found someone who has the same commitments I do and maybe even more radical ones, in some ways.

You have a new book coming out this spring on the death penalty. It's got a great title: *Executing Grace*. Working against the death penalty means organizing, mobilizing, and trying to save real people's lives in real time, but also changing policy and laws. How have your thoughts evolved over time on how Christians need to confront and engage politics to make changes? Part of what I've realized is that engaging politically is a part of what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves. "Political" has the same root as *polis*—you know, like "Indianapolis." It's about how we live together as people.

Cornel West is right when he says that "justice is what love looks like in public." I think we can have policies that create barriers to compassion and to love. Or we can create policies that stand on the side of life, as we think about things such as gun violence and other major issues. Just as slavery was a political issue, it was also a social and moral issue. But slavery is not the only one. Many of these other things that we love to talk about are spiritual issues as well. We can't be engaged politically from a distance. With some policy makers, part of the problem is that they have no proximity to suffering. They've grown away from the people most affected by the policies.

We have to make sure that politics is personal. To love our neighbor as ourselves also causes us to care about the machinery of death and the systems and the principalities that are robbing them of their dignity or holding them hostage.

For years you were known for your dreads. Why no more dreadlocks? Well, I probably needed a haircut—I've had like two haircuts in the last 20 years. But the real story is I went to Afghanistan. I got to visit these wonderful young people through Friends Without Borders and the Afghan Peace Volunteers. When I was going to Afghanistan, they said, We recommend that you cut your hair. I said, Because I'll stand out and everybody will know I'm a foreigner from the U.S.? They said, No, we're actually more concerned that they will think you're with al Qaeda. I said, Let's get the scissors. So I got a little trim.

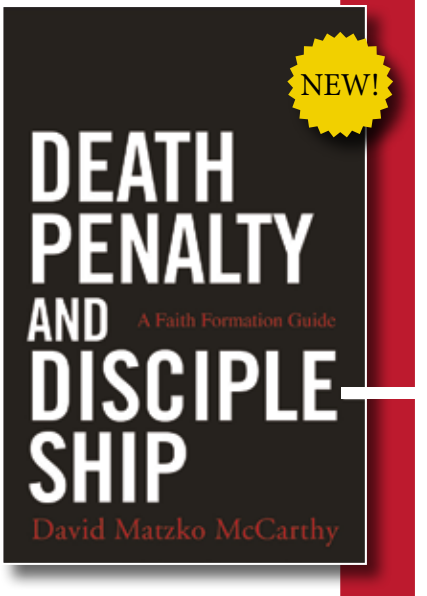
We don't want to be a community *in* the neighborhood; we want to be a community *with* the neighborhood.

***Irresistible Revolution* became a life-changing book for a generation of people. How have you dealt with the attention it has brought you?** Community keeps you pretty grounded. Even the decision to write the book was a decision I made with my community. One of the things we decided was to give away all the proceeds from that book.

I also discern with my community and my wife about how much I travel. One time, Harvard had a speaker cancel, and they called to invite me to speak. My travel days were full. I brought it before the committee that works with me on that, and they said, Your travel days are full. I said, This is Harvard! And they said, Harvard will be there next year. So I said no to that invitation.

Death Penalty and Discipleship
A Faith Formation Guide
David Matzko McCarthy

"An invaluable resource for those seeking to engage in formation of conscience, both personally and communally, around the practice of capital punishment. Small faith communities, parishes, and adult faith formation programs will find it accessible, thoughtful, and well grounded in Scripture and the wisdom of ecclesial tradition."
Margaret Pfeil, The University of Notre Dame



David Matzko McCarthy's *Death Penalty and Discipleship* is a faith formation resource to help communities and individuals reflect more deeply on capital punishment.

God loves the world and gives himself to the world, and we are called to share God's justice and mercy with others. In this insightful and challenging resource, McCarthy encourages us to follow the call of Pope Francis to live out the love and mercy of God for all the world.

Paperback, 72 pp., $9.95
eBook, $7.99

LITURGICAL PRESS
litpress.org • 1-800-858-5450

That was a decision I might not have been able to make on my own.

I've written every book after my first one with someone else. What we do is use our voice to amplify others. The death penalty book really is about amplifying the voices of the murder victims' families that are against execution and the voices of folks who've been wrongfully convicted.

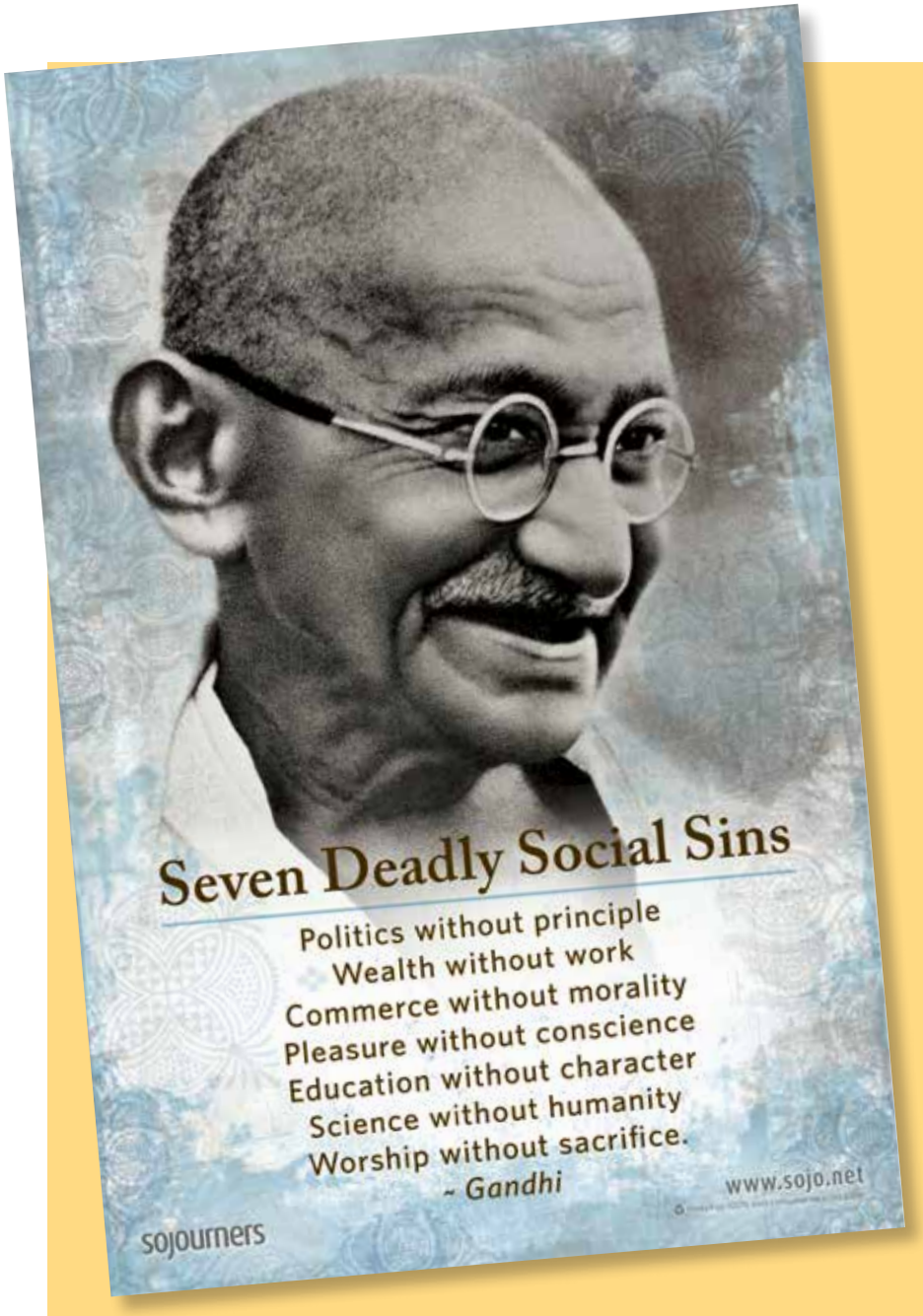
How do you combat cynicism and retain your joy? How do you keep hope at the center of things? We have to remember that we're not asking God to be on our side; we're trying to be on God's side. We trust that there's an overt hand in all this that's bigger than our own. We're activists at heart.

A few years into all this, we did a book called *Common Prayer*, where we built on the different ways that people have prayed in different traditions; we included songs of freedom movements and spirituals and hymns.

We really had to revitalize our own prayer life. We had to learn to pray again and connect our prayer with action, so that it's not an excuse for inaction. Prayer fuels our ability to believe that things can be different.

Community also gives me courage. We don't bear the burdens on our own, but we carry them together. Community is about creating a critical mass, just like coals of a fire keep the fire alive. You put a fire out by spreading the coals out; you keep the fire alive by putting it together. We keep fanning each other's flame of hope. I live with hopeful people. I live with imaginative people. I live with folks who play a lot of pranks and have a lot of fun. I like the paraphrase from Emma Goldman: If I can't dance, it's not my revolution. That's part of what we do for each other.

I hope we'll continue to heal the wounds of racial injustice and look back and smile at the things we've accomplished. I'm thankful for all of those folks who have come before, and I'm inspired by a new generation of folks. I just hit 40 this year. I remember when my dad turned 40; it felt to me like he was ancient. It's amazing to see a new group of young folks who are coming up and are taking things even further than we have. ■



Sojourners' Gandhi Poster

FREE with a new subscription to *Sojourners* magazine.

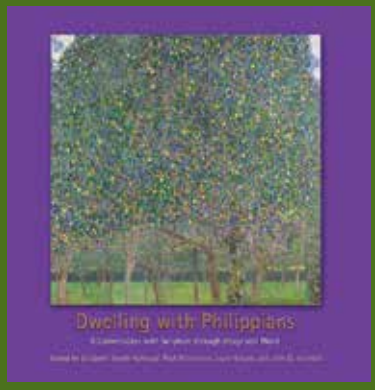
Sojourners has already sold more than a thousand copies of this popular poster. Get yours FREE by subscribing to *Sojourners* magazine today.

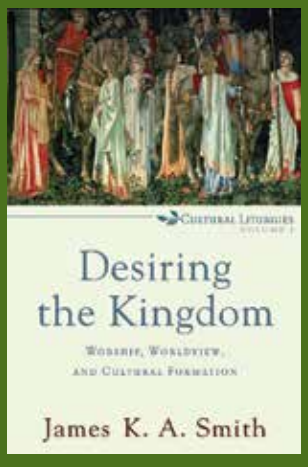
Get a year of the award-winning *Sojourners* magazine (11 issues for $39.95) and we'll send you a poster featuring Gandhi's provocative list of seven deadly social sins. This beautiful new edition of one of Sojourners' classic posters is printed with soy ink on 100% recycled paper and is sure to spark conversation.

Call 1-800-678-9691 to place your paid order; mention code S1602GAND and ask for the free Gandhi poster.

Call today and get your free Seven Deadly Social Sins poster.
Offer available for phone orders only.

Indispensable Resources for Worship and the Christian Life





CALVIN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP
WORSHIP.CALVIN.EDU

come walk with us

Cambodia | East Africa | Glasgow | Guatemala | Honduras | London | Los Angeles | Miami | Minneapolis | Oakland | San Francisco | South Africa | South Asia | Venezuela

SummerXchange 2016
40 day internship alongside an InnerCHANGE team from June 1 to July 18, 2016

Apprenticeships
Many teams are accepting 1 to 3 year apprentices to join them in ministry, starting in September 2016 and January 2017.

To learn more
Visit *summerxchange.org* and *innerchange.org*

As an incarnational order among the poor, InnerCHANGE forms teams to live in marginalized communities and accompany people facing poverty around the world. Motivated by joy and gratitude, our aim is to make disciples of Jesus and develop local leaders who are marked by merciful action, transformative contemplation and prophetic justice.

InnerCHANGE
innerchange.org

InnerCHANGE is a ministry of CRM EMPOWERING LEADERS

BY JULIA ALVAREZ

Not a Thief

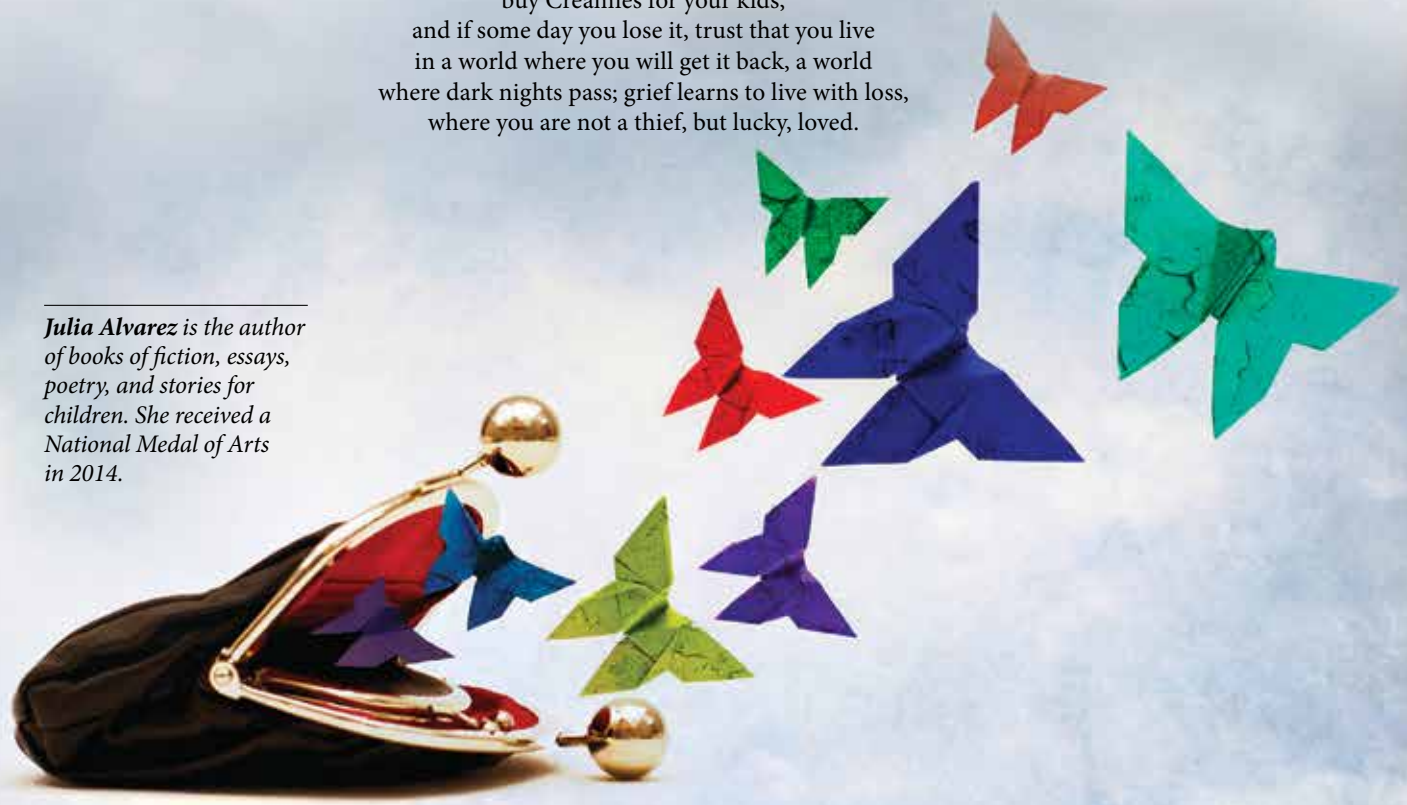
They steal more than our cash who steal our money, dropped bills
slipped in a finder's pocket, a wallet emptied of its fill;
they steal a kinder world where we look out for each other,
call to know: *How did your date,* or, *surgery go?*
Can I help you with that heavy load? A world where we make
room in a long line, clap for another's show.

They steal this kind of world, not just from you and me,
but from themselves, a world where neither we—
nor they—would want to live. And so when the thief
who didn't mean to steal as much by stealing
just some money from my wallet, left (emptied) at my door,
justified by: *She doesn't need it*
half as much as I do, or, *this is my just reward for finding it,*
a ray of light for the dark nights of my soul,
honey in the rock on my rocky road, leftover manna dropped
by a god I've never found much use for—

I did not want the world we want to live in
to be stolen, too; to greet each face,
wondering, *So was it you?* And so, this posting's
not a plea or offer of reward, but a resolve:

whoever kept my cash, accept it as my gift,
spend it in good faith, take a sad friend
to lunch, slip the tired waitress a large tip,
buy Creamies for your kids,
and if some day you lose it, trust that you live
in a world where you will get it back, a world
where dark nights pass; grief learns to live with loss,
where you are not a thief, but lucky, loved.

Julia Alvarez *is the author of books of fiction, essays, poetry, and stories for children. She received a National Medal of Arts in 2014.*



Catherine MacBride

We believe that we are all called to be sojourners, led by our faith.

Are you a SOJOURNER?

To be a sojourner is to put your faith into action. To be an advocate—and often an outsider. To be continuously converted and challenged by Matthew 25's call to serve the poor, the marginalized, the least of these.

We don't believe in maintaining the status quo. We speak truth to power. And we don't sit still: We write, we act, we engage, we mobilize. We come from diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and ideologies, but we come together as bridge-builders.

Become a sojourner today. When you join our movement and invest in this work, you actively help us shift the conversation toward the common good.

Donate at **www.sojo.net/contribute2016,** or fill out the detachable form and send your donation to the address below.

Questions? Call **1-800-714-7474** or email **donate@sojo.net.**

TEAR-OFF

❑ My check is enclosed, payable to Sojourners.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

❑ I would like more information about including Sojourners in my will or estate plans.

❑ I would like more information about the Sustainers Circle, Sojourners' community of monthly donors.

❑ I wish to donate stock. Please contact me.

Mail to: Sojourners, Attn: Sojo Giving
P.O. Box 70730, Washington, DC 20024-0730

sojourners
www.sojo.net

By Valerie Miles-Tribble

Can You **Hear It?**

Hip-hop, spoken word, and the voice of prophetic ethics.

JUSTICE-CONSCIOUS clergy and theologians have been drawn to the Black Lives Matter movement by resonating eschatological beliefs and prophetic ethics. However, movement motivations differ for many of the millennial activist leaders whose ethical sensibilities and theological worldview are not framed necessarily by doctrinal faith, ecclesiology, or trust in the church as an arbiter of God's right and wrong.

Instead these millennial activists, unlike the boomers allied with them, relate to ethical messages found in popular cultural streams of hip-hop and spoken word that voice this generation's pervasive questioning about theodicy—the presence of good and evil—in the world. These lyrical works articulate a generational critique of lived experiences that warrant further ethical and theological analysis. The challenge for the church and its faith leaders is: Do we listen?

In a Sojo.net post last August, I noted that the 2015 anthem chant "Hell You Talmbout," by Janelle Monáe and Wondaland, voiced an ethical polemic on prevalent state-sanctioned practices of extrajudicial injustice. The chanted names of those killed serve to demand

Hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar

their remembrance as persons. As a rallying cry across the nation, the call-and-response lyrics convey a hymnody challenging the anonymity of invisibility.

Similarly, rap artist Kendrick Lamar's 2015 song "Alright" was rapidly adopted in the Black Lives Matter movement as a counterhegemonic anthem that pushed against police violence with a first-person examination of mortality on the margins.

Lamar's lyrical messaging in "Alright" linked cultural expression with socio-theological meaning to craft a survival ethic. Intentional use of the N-word sears the embedded consciousness of an older generation for whom the term is historically tied to the evils of slavocracy and Jim Crow segregation. However, Lamar intentionally turns to the signifying trope and demoralizing images that cast "othered" black and brown bodies into racially pejorative stereotypes. In the present millennial context, the N-word is used as a catchphrase of familiarity among peers but is also acknowledged as a pejorative used by police to identify or label black bodies—as many audio-visual recordings of incidents attest—while extrajudicial methods are physically applied. Use of repetitive lyrics in "Alright" amplifies an epistemological and ethical conundrum about systematized oppression. But do we listen?

Wouldn't you know—we been hurt, been down before
N----, when our pride was low, lookin' at the world like, "Where do we go?"
N----, and we hate po-po; wanna kill us dead in the street fo sho
N----, I'm at the preacher's door
My knees gettin' weak, and my gun might blow
But we gon' be alright

The images in the video for "Alright" expose, with satirical irony and stark reality, that lived experiences in neighborhoods on the brink of ghettoized existence are linked to systemic control by powerful, privileged forces. Lamar's juxtaposition of a bodily spirit in flight creates tension between the evils of oppression and a spiritual will to survive. This theoethical tension is captured when a voiced recognition of the "evils of Lucy" (Lucifer) all around is jolted into silence when a uniformed figure fires a single gunshot that sends Lamar's black body careening off the high perch of a street light.

Thus we are challenged: Let those with ears to hear, listen!

Yet, despite the raw realities, Lamar threads a countermessage throughout, a call to survival connected to a theological belief that God (if real) will prevail—"if God got us / Then we gon' be alright." Such ethical messaging in spoken word lyrics have both allegorical and secular-sacred

Continued on Page 43

New & Noteworthy

WHAT WE NEED
My Little Book of Big Freedoms: The Human Rights Act in Pictures, illustrated by British writer-illustrator Chris Riddell, is a pocket-sized booklet with winsome illustrations of 16 freedoms and protections we might take for granted, including life, freedom, justice, belief, thought, togetherness, love, and mercy. Amnesty International U.K.

LIFE TOGETHER
How can families of all shapes and sizes nurture human dignity, service, and the common good in the home and society? In *Schools of Solidarity: Families and Catholic Social Teaching*, Mary M. Doyle Roche offers practical, joyful guidance, with questions and activities for discussion and reflection. Liturgical Press

TRUE WEALTH
For many believers money, debt, consumerism, and tithing are touchier topics than are sex and politics. In *The Christian Wallet: Spending, Giving, and Living with a Conscience*, pastor and author Mike Slaughter, with Karen Perry Smith, fearlessly explores how to bring light and life to our finances. Westminster John Knox

AWAKEN AND RISE
Writers literary and theological, classic and contemporary provide wise and beautiful companionship on the journey to resurrection in *All Shall Be Well: Readings for Lent and Easter*, co-edited by Michael Leach, James Keane, and Doris Goodnough. Orbis

BY DANNY DUNCAN COLLUM

The Substance of Truth

IN 1976, STILL fairly early in his epic career, Robert Redford played Bob Woodward in *All the President's Men,* a tense and ultimately triumphant retelling of the *Washington Post* Watergate investigation that led to President Richard Nixon's resignation.

Now, near the end of that same career, in the movie *Truth* Redford plays CBS News anchor Dan Rather, in the story of how Rather stumbled, fell, and was pushed out of big-time journalism in the course of pursuing the truth about George W. Bush's mysterious Vietnam-era "service" in the Texas Air National Guard.

The great moral test for many men of the baby boom generation was "what did you do about the draft?" Questions about how he had eluded the draft dogged our first baby boomer president, Bill Clinton. Then the campaigns of 2000 and 2004 brought the historic test of the baby boom soul front and center, pitting Bush, a baby boomer born to privilege and pro-war politics, against two Democrats, also born to privilege, who volunteered for the military and actually served in Vietnam. Al Gore had a noncombat role and was only in Vietnam for five months, but still, he was there, in a uniform, sometimes carrying a gun. As a Navy lieutenant, John Kerry was honored for courage in battle.

Courage was sometimes in short supply among the mainstream media.

Bush, on the other hand, joined a platoon of other fortunate sons in the Texas Air National Guard. He trained as a pilot, then stopped flying and didn't show up for his mandatory pilot physicals. He got permission to transfer to a Guard unit in Alabama so he could work on a Republican senatorial campaign, but only one Alabama Guard member claims to have seen him. Finally, he disappeared to Harvard Business School and may have never completed his required days of service.

Robert Redford and Cate Blanchett in *Truth*

There were stories about Bush's wartime shirking in 2000. In 2004, the irony and outrage were intensified when W.'s opponent, Kerry, a bona fide war hero, was subjected to slander from the notorious "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth" PAC.

It was in this environment that Mary Mapes, a CBS producer working with Rather, went digging for the truth about Bush's military service, or lack thereof. Mapes was given letters purportedly written by one of W.'s commanders complaining about the young pilot's disappearing acts. Two of the four document experts Mapes' team consulted warned that the letters could be bogus. But CBS went ahead and put the story on the air, only to be blindsided by an internet fury over "forgeries" that ended up killing the Texas National Guard story for the rest of the campaign season.

In *All the President's Men*, the movie's dramatic low point comes when Woodward and Bernstein are caught in a terrible mistake. They have put a story on the front page saying that a grand jury witness had named Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, as a key figure in the Watergate cover-up, when in fact Haldeman's name had never come up. The *Post* was widely derided for the error. Woodward and Bernstein feared they might have to resign. But their editor, Ben Bradlee, trusted that they had the substance of the story right and stood by them through the furor.

When Rather and Mapes found themselves in a similar position after the National Guard story, CBS News appointed a Republican former attorney general, Richard Thornburgh, to investigate their mistake and threw the journalists under the bus.

For a while, back in 1986, Dan Rather infamously signed off his daily broadcasts with the odd exhortation: "Courage." As *Truth* reminds us, courage was sometimes in short supply among the mainstream media in those early years of this century, when the Bush regime of war, torture, and surveillance seemed so all-powerful and untouchable. ■

Danny Duncan Collum *teaches writing at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. He is the author of the novel* White Boy.

Continued from Page 41

significance that grounds the Black Lives Matter movement exhortation to "stay woke" for a millennial generation. Spoken word in popular culture gives public exposure that exponentially increases awareness of social disparity. Thus we are challenged, just as the gospels give Jesus' admonition: Let those with ears to hear, listen!

For public theology, the secular-sacred avenues of messaging in the public square are not new. Neo-soul artist Erykah Badu often used her lyrical lens to raise socio-critical questions in releases such as "On & On": "If we were made in his image then call us by our names / Most intellects do not believe in God but they fear us just the same."

These lyrics specifically challenge a social order as well as recognize that all humanity being created in the image of God does not

The N-word sears the consciousness of an older generation.

prevent one part of humanity from disdaining or fearing another. Badu also critiques a hegemonic view of intellect by arguing that it does not guarantee enlightenment. In many instances, the social commentary in Badu's and other artists' lyrics intentionally clash with images in the accompanying video, heightening an unsettled sense of awareness in the listener/viewer while the artist essentially deconstructs the normative tropes of "what really is truth?"

For example, in Badu's video presentation of "Window Seat," the frame opens with a voice-over of a radio news flash on the arrival of a dignitary motorcade somewhere in the city, possibly to signify that all media attention is turned in that direction. An anonymous woman parks, places coins in the meter, and begins to walk the city streets. Meanwhile, lyrics and images focus on her innermost thoughts, perhaps a rehash of tenuous relationships or self-reflection on her mental and emotional sense of place. The black female symbolizes those marginalized by their reality; as she walks, she appears lost in her own thoughts and seemingly invisible to the passersby.

ONFILM

BY GARETH HIGGINS

From *Shaun the Sheep*

THE BEST OF **2015**

HERE ARE my picks for the best films of 2015. Honorable mentions for *Creed*'s operatic dignity and subtle advocacy of racial reconciliation; *The Forbidden Room*'s unabashed creative inspiration; *Mad Max: Fury Road* for being a pro-feminist action film; *Spectre* for James Bond going beyond an eye for an eye; *Grandma*, Lily Tomlin's crowning achievement as an actor embodying that it's okay to be different; and *Room*, part-thriller, part-existential exploration, honest about trauma and the lengths love will go to protect the vulnerable.

10. Shaun the Sheep. A delightfully inclusive, breathtakingly crafted story about humans, animals, and nature as one family. With frenetic comedy and an open heart, it honors the marginalized, critiques superficiality, and even lets the villain live to learn his lesson.

9. Me and Earl and the Dying Girl. An indie comedy-drama that avoids cliché and makes heroes out of nerds.

8. Beasts of No Nation. Evoking *Apocalypse Now*, a harrowing story of child soldiers, the legacy of colonialism, and how violence is transmitted from one generation to the next.

7. Clouds of Sils Maria. A stark reflection on identity and the conversation each of us has with the voice(s) in our head. Olivier Assayas' film asks if we are living from the inside out or for external reward.

6. Brooklyn. A poetic and compassionate painting of the paradox of finding home as an immigrant.

5. The Salt of the Earth. The great German director Wim Wenders understands how images impact the world. This is the most visually overwhelming film of the year, in which photographer Sebastião Salgado heals the wounds of witnessing horror.

4. Love & Mercy. A brilliant music biopic about Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys that is more interested in his inner life than his outer success.

3. Inside Out. This is the best Pixar film, a beautifully wise work about how to become a mature human being (there are no shortcuts).

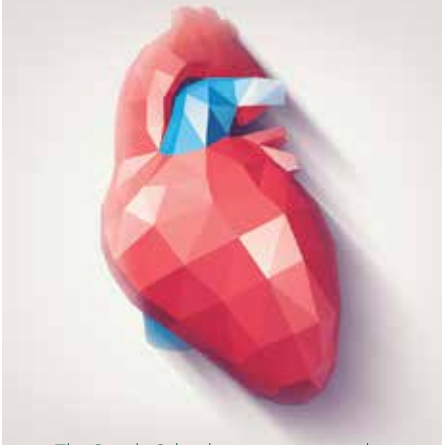
2. Spotlight. Comparable to *All the President's Men*, Tom McCarthy's film tells a journalism story with no superheroes—just ordinary people doing faithful work to expose a monstrous injustice.

1. Listen to Me Marlon. An amazing, original film using Marlon Brando's personal audio journals as the soundtrack to clips of his movies and archive footage. This is private confession reshaped for a public hungry for wisdom. ■

***Gareth Higgins** is an Irish writer and the founder of moviesandmeaning.com.*

Humanity is fractured.

Injustice creates the collective trauma that leaves us feeling deep loneliness, shame, heartache, and cynicism.



The Seattle School community wrestles with the call to bind up the brokenhearted by training leaders and healers who are attuned to their own wounding in order to be present and responsive to the heartbeat of a hurting world.

The Seattle School
OF THEOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY

Learn more at theseattleschool.edu

ECUMENICAL TANTUR INSTITUTE JERUSALEM

TANTUR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

Offering sabbaticals and continuing education programs in the Holy Land.

On a hill in Jerusalem, near Bethlehem

TANTUR.ORG

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Don't want nobody next to me
I just want a ticket outta town
A look around and a safe touch down…
I just want a chance to fly
A chance to cry and a long bye-bye

Dynamics suddenly change as she sheds clothing every few steps. Is this a shedding symbolic of layers of pain that covered up her life force, or possibly smothered her very being? The camera pans on disinterested passersby who do not acknowledge or understand internalized feelings of being wronged and invisible. Yet their external reactions—symbolic of society—change suddenly as they try to avoid the immediate vicinity around the nearly naked body. The lyrics critique marginality while the video viewer is fixed on a body

A uniformed figure fires a single gunshot into Lamar's black body.

nearly free of normative vestiges of respectability—that assuredly must appear as a bodily threat to the world she inhabits.

Viewer sensibilities are further jolted when that body is killed—shot down as strange, unwanted, "other," with little reaction from onlookers. The exposed body lies dead in the public streets like Ferguson's Michael Brown, Cleveland's Tamir Rice, New York's Eric Garner, or Chicago's Rekia Boyd and Laquan McDonald. It spurs theoethical questions as a young woman's smiling face appears in the camera lens—perhaps to signify resurrection or rebirth?

For the millennial protest activists, the critique of societal systems in which such killings occur today are not far from dynamics in scriptural accounts that hint at oppressive structures conspiring to crucify a rabbi on Golgotha. Lyrical messaging in popular culture represents the disruptive politics of a millennial movement that pushes against the alleged "respectability politics" of more conservative churches and clergy leaders. Millennial activists call us to a public theology in the mode of a more radical gospel message. But do we listen?

BADU'S CONTEMPORARY Lauryn Hill captures another angle of the rawness of survival ethics with potential theological insight through lyrics that also stake a claim on Jesus' imperative: Let those with ears to hear, listen. Hill invokes Bob Marley's theological lens for her words in "Forgive Them Father":

Why for you to increase, I must decrease?
If I treat you kindly does it mean that I'm weak? …
Forgive them father for they know not what they do …

The impact of popular culture on listeners, young and old, might be for entertainment on the surface. But other dimensions of the artistic messages are illumined when heard and viewed with ethical and theological eyes and ears. Black neo-soul lyrics and hip-hop spoken word messages offer a worldview, a mosaic of experiences, and a visceral reaction to unjust realities that simultaneously grips and convicts privileged notions of what is normative, ethical, and morally acceptable. Lyrical messaging also amplifies public square dilemmas central to the ethical platforms of the Black Lives Matter movement, including an awareness of mental illness and depression as possible manifestations of oppression.

In the theoethical framing of popular cultural messaging, it is possible to grasp the social critique, engage to challenge injustice, and follow the path to band together healing and faith as a means for survival. Use of these lyrics and videos also spark classroom engagement with fervent discussion of praxis. I use Stacey Floyd-Thomas' ethical frames from her book *Mining the Motherlode* to demythologize and demystify negative responses to black being and body. In the womanist ethics classes I've taught, male and female seminarians grapple with what the images and lyrics signify for them as a contextual re-*membering* of body. Today's opportune question is how do we engage these messages for deeper theological discourse and ethical application? Let those with ears to hear: Listen! ■

Valerie Miles-Tribble *is an assistant professor of ministerial leadership and practical theology at American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley, Calif. She is also an ordained pastor and womanist theologian/community activist.*

Rev. Rob Schenck in *The Armor of Light.*

Reviewed by Caroline Barnett

GUNS AND THE EVANGELICAL **CHRISTIAN**

***The Armor of Light*, directed by Abigail E. Disney. Fork Films.**

AT FIRST GLANCE, Abigail Disney's documentary *The Armor of Light* seems straightforward: It's about guns and escalation of mass shootings in the U.S. But at its core, the film looks at the complicated relationship between evangelical Christianity and this country's gun culture. It is just as much about theology as it is about politics.

The film follows the story of Rob Schenck, a conservative evangelical minister whose strong pro-life views about abortion are at the center of his work and advocacy on Capitol Hill. But with each instance of gun violence he hears about, Schenck becomes convinced that calling himself pro-life rings hollow without a critical look at our gun culture. He can no longer ignore the association of guns with evangelical Christianity.

Schenck becomes convinced that calling himself pro-life rings hollow without a critical look at our gun culture.

Schenck's story intersects with that of Lucia McBath, the mother of Jordan Davis. In 2012, Davis, a black teenager, was shot and killed at a Florida gas station in a dispute over the volume of his music. The man who fired the shots, a 45-year-old white male, tried to justify his actions by the "stand your ground" law, explaining he felt threatened by the presence of Davis and his three friends. In response to the death of her child and the following legal battle, McBath became involved in gun-control advocacy.

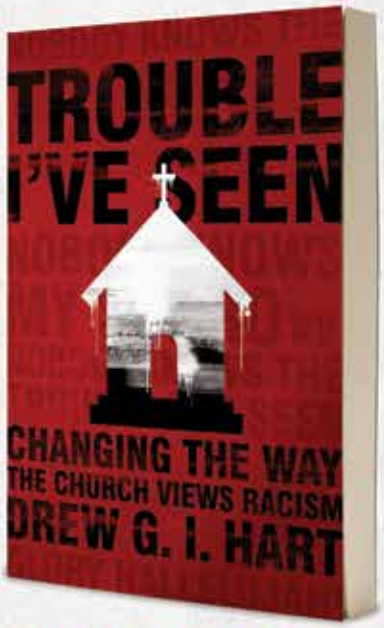
Coming to the issue from different paths, McBath and Schenck find themselves both allies and foils. McBath, the mother whose son was murdered for being black and present, identifies as pro-choice, while Schenck gained national attention for protesting women's health clinics in the early 1990s in Buffalo, N.Y.

This already has the makings of a compelling story, but the film hits its stride not in character development but in the theological questions it poses. In addition to discussing the effects of gun violence on those who are killed, Schenck questions what this pervasive gun culture does to those who defend it.

He pushes against the platitude "the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun," asking who can definitively categorize others in such black-and-white terms. Likewise, the film asks why so many Christians seem to place more trust in a piece of metal than in God. McBath tells Schenck, "We have replaced God with our guns as the protector."

This is not a documentary that just calls for reform of our laws—it asks deep questions about the fundamental nature of our gun obsession and its relationship to Christianity. In the wake of the 2014 Isla Vista, Calif. shooting, Richard Martinez, the

FOR CHRISTIANS OF ALL RACES
—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



WHAT IF RACIAL RECONCILIATION DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WHAT YOU EXPECTED?

Police brutality. Mass incarceration. Antiblack stereotypes. Poverty. Everyday acts of racism. **TROUBLE I'VE SEEN** challenges Christians with an honest examination of racial bias and offers concrete practices for those who seek solidarity with the oppressed and are committed to racial justice.

By blogger, theologian, minister, and activist
DREW G. I. HART

www.drewgihart.com
/Drew.GI.Hart

Details at
Herald Press.com

father of a victim, asks Schenck, "Where the hell are the clergy people?" advocating for a change in our culture. His admonishment should resound through Christian communities and wake us up.

While *The Armor of Light* asks good questions, it leaves the viewer wanting more. Lucia McBath's story, though compelling and raw, is clearly secondary to Schenck's story of personal revelation and questioning of his powerful community. At times, the film's obvious purpose of reaching predominantly white evangelical Christian communities leaves little space for McBath and her work as an anti-gun advocate with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

This documentary is the first public statement Schenck has made about his commitment to a public stance on guns, and he hopes it will be a conversation changer in pro-gun evangelical communities. Perhaps it will: Screenings of the film are free to any member of the NRA as an attempt to get more pro-gun people to enter into this conversation. But if the reactions of Schenck's colleagues in the documentary are any indication, these conversations will be fraught with tension and require compassion from all sides.

The Armor of Light questions what it means to live in a culture that places devotion to guns on the same level as devotion to God. It leaves us with few answers but makes clear the urgent need to find some. ■

Caroline Barnett *is an editorial assistant with* Sojourners.

Reviewed by Jenna Barnett

IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU **KNOW IT...**

***Felicity: Poems*, by Mary Oliver. Penguin Press.**

I HAD GEARED myself up for a sort of Job-God exchange between Mary Oliver and some wild roses in the aptly named "Roses," from her latest collection of poems, *Felicity*.

This is the scene: The narrator, full of poetic angst and existential fatalism, approaches some huddled roses and wonders in their direction: "What happens when the curtain goes / down and nothing stops it, not kissing, / not going to the mall, not the Super Bowl."

I was ready for the roses to respond in a whirlwind full of rhetorical questions about the wonder and origin of creation. Instead they deflect the inquiry: "'But as you can see, we are / just now entirely busy being roses.'"

Rachel Brown

Poet Mary Oliver reads to a friend.

And I laughed. In the past, Oliver's poetry has caused me to cry over a dog (see "The First Time Percy Came Back") and pray accidentally (see "The Summer Day"), but never before had her poems made me laugh.

In her 2014 collection *Blue Horses*, the flowers are "fragile blue." They are "wrinkled and fading in the grass" until the next morning when somehow they crawl back up to the shrubs, bloom a bit, decide they want—just like all of us—"a little more of / life." Now, in her latest collection of poetry, Oliver's flowers are red, and they want as much life as they can get. They are carefree roses with a love of causal banter and a kind distaste for troubling existential questions.

These are not Oliver's best poems, but they are her happiest, her most concise, her most openly religious. But the most talked-about difference in this collection is the presence of humans. Oliver has long been lauded for her ability to say so much about the human experience while rarely featuring human characters in her work. In *Felicity*, humans are "discovering / new ways to love." So they find themselves kissing on beds and near bodies of water, wishing they could sing, giving their money away, and "drinking the sun."

This book is essentially a collection of love poems: first to God, then to humans, all with the backdrop of the natural creation Oliver has devoted her life to paying attention to.

In *Felicity*, we discover a poet who has found God (on a pond, in a tree, on the backs of bowing lilies) and who has lost her subtlety. Her poems are shorter and her tone more pastoral. Mary Oliver is happy, it seems, and she has no time for any pretty ambiguity to obscure that important message.

She advises readers to "Let God and the world know you are grateful" without offering an accompanying metaphor. She writes, "Love is the one thing / you can't steal" without any imagery for evidence. And, somehow, she does this successfully. These poems are playful and wise, but mainly they are just happy.

Writers are often advised to "show don't tell." This collection bumps up against that conventional wisdom in favor of much more whimsical truths. I'm still a believer in "show don't tell," but if you must just tell, tell it like Mary Oliver. ■

Jenna Barnett *was a 2015 peace writer for the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice.*

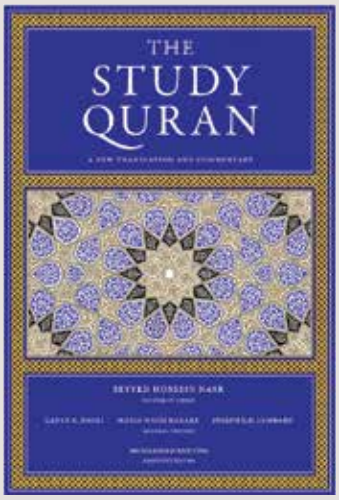
EXCERPT

OPENING A SACRED **TEXT**

HarperOne's recently *released* The Study Quran *(following* The Study Bible *and* Commentary on the Torah*) promises to be a needed resource in a time of religious turmoil: A new English translation, it is also the first to provide extensive, line-by-line commentary by scholars on meaning and context drawn from hundreds of years of Islamic tradition. Included are several essays on specific themes—including war and peace, science, and human rights.*

The process used to shape this work was unique as well. The team of editors led by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., strove to include perspectives and interpretations from the broadest range of Muslim communities—Sunni, Shia, and others—without lifting one above the others. The team's goal was to create an in-depth, accurate, and accessible translation for use by Muslims, scholars, students of religion, and anyone else wanting to rise above today's media chatter and explore this sacred text.

—The Editors



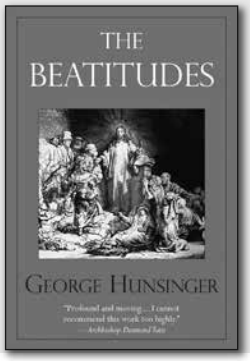
From the introduction:

The Quran is the constant companion of Muslims in the journey of life. Its verses are the first sounds recited into the ear of the newborn child. It is recited during the marriage ceremony, and its verses are usually the last words that a Muslim hears upon the approach of death. In traditional Islamic society, the sound of the recitation of the Quran was ubiquitous, and it determined the space in which men and women lived their daily lives; this is still true to a large extent in many places even today. As for the Quran as a book, it is found in nearly every Muslim home and is carried or worn in various forms and sizes by men and women for protection as they go about their daily activities. ... The Quran is an ever present source of blessing or grace (*barakah*) deeply experienced by Muslims as permeating all of life.

Inasmuch as the Quran is the central, sacred, revealed reality for Muslims, *The Study Quran* addresses it as such and does not limit it to a work of merely historical, social, or linguistic interest divorced from its sacred and revealed character. To this end, the focus of *The Study Quran* is on the Quran's reception and interpretation within the Muslim intellectual and spiritual tradition, although this does not mean that Muslims are the only intended audience, since the work is meant to be of use to various scholars, teachers, students, and general readers. It is with this Book, whose recitation brings Muslims from Sumatra to Senegal to tears, and not simply with a text important for the study of Semitic philology or the social conditions of first/seventh-century Arabia, that this study deals. ■

From The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary, *copyright 2015 by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor-in-chief. Published by HarperOne.*

"Profound and moving...I cannot recommend this work too highly."
—ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU



THE BEATITUDES
GEORGE HUNSINGER
Thoughtful and thought-provoking, George Hunsinger provides a fresh reflection on the Beatitudes by looking at them as centered in Christ, considering each one as being about Jesus. In this way, it is Jesus who is poor in spirit, who mourns, who is meek. This perspective enables us to see others as participating in Christ.
978-0-8091-0614-1 $19.95 HC
Available at bookstores or from **PAULIST PRESS**
800-218-1903 • fax 800-836-3161
www.paulistpress.com

YOU:
a creative, fearless, spiritually-rooted thinker, ready to build a world where everyone can thrive.

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION:
a radically progressive seminary, offering the tools you need to build that better world.

Explore our programs at the intersection of faith and social transformation:

- Master of Arts in Social Transformation
- Master of Divinity
- Certificate of Spirituality and Social Change

Learn more at **www.psr.edu**
510/849-8931 or 800/999-0528

PACIFIC School of Religion
BERKELEY, CA

BY JASON BYASSEE

Why Do Good Things Happen?

LENT IS A GIFT. It is a hard scrub brush for when we're covered with grime that won't come off in an ordinary bath.

Lent is popularly associated with "giving up" things. This giving up is easy to lampoon. When I gave up meat once, a friend said, "If you want to go on a diet, don't pretend you're doing it for Jesus." Lent is a remarkably ineffective season for weight loss. Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection, so Sundays aren't technically days of Lent. On Sundays you can indulge as much as you want. It's not the best diet plan. But it does remind us that resurrection crowns every week and so every fast.

Lent is our minor participation in Jesus' 40-day fast, which is itself a participation in Israel's 40-year sojourn in the wilderness. It's meant to be hard (a friend who loves to fast says he gives up fasting for Lent!). In Lent we say "no" to just a few of our desires. This is countercultural in a Western world bent on saying "yes!" to every consumerist desire, however bizarre. But these little "no's" are really geared to help us say "yes" to Jesus more. It might hurt at first, especially if we're not used to it, like every good habit. And in the gospel's strange economy, saying no is the way to life.

***Jason Byassee** holds the Butler chair in homiletics and biblical hermeneutics at Vancouver School of Theology in British Columbia.*

[FEBRUARY 7]

A Face Alight

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:2; Luke 9:28-43a

YOU'VE SEEN FACES shine before. Think of the radiant pregnant woman. Think of a speaker or an athlete or a dancer in a groove, performing like few can. Think of those few moments in life so magical you can't stop smiling.

Moses' face shines so brightly his fellow Jews ask him to cover it. He's in the presence of a light so incandescent it has been known to kill people. Moses' face is like the light of the moon—a reflection of a greater light on which we cannot look directly.

If Moses' face shines, Jesus' whole body shines. So does the mountaintop all around. Moses turns up to join in the shine, along with Elijah, and they discuss the "departure" or "exodus" (Luke 9:31) that Jesus will soon accomplish at Jerusalem.

This shine is what Epiphany—the season just concluding—is about. It is a season of light. The magi come and worship Jesus. He turns water to wine. Each text from January 6 to now is meant to throw light on who Jesus is and what he means to the world. Soon the texts will be hard—Lenten, penitential, including combat with the devil and demands to take up a cross. This text of shining faces and landscapes and promises gives us a glimpse at the glory on the other side of repentance.

This "glory" is a mixed legacy. The word for Moses' shining face was notoriously translated "horns" in Latin Bibles. In the past, Christian images of Moses often show him with horns—which became a pretext for anti-Semitism when the church said Moses, his teaching, and his people, the Jews, were diabolical. Apparently the two-edgedness of the word is fitting in Hebrew. Moses' grandeur *is* a mixed blessing. His face shines and/or has horns, just as Moses is both glorious and has flaws, like every leader, just as God's presence both kills and gives life.

The presence of God is a dangerous thing. It can make you shine or make you dead; it fills the world with light and our eyes recoil.

[FEBRUARY 14]

Temptation to Cheat

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

IT IS CHARMING that St. Valentine's Day and the first Sunday of Lent are simultaneous. Go ahead and nosh on the chocolate: Every Sunday is a little Easter, fit for feasting.

Not that Jesus will indulge with you today. He's famished—having fasted 40 days. Don't pass over this too quickly. Jesus is entirely human, and he's as hungry as we would be if we were to fast so long.

The devil offers good things: bread, power, protection from death. He even uses scripture to promote his suggestions. He offers things that Jesus uses elsewhere: Jesus is the bread of life, and makes more bread when there is not enough. Jesus, contrary to the devil's claim (Luke 4:6), is the unacknowledged Lord of everything. Jesus plans to conquer the grave not by avoiding it but rather by suffering it himself.

This might be a good Sunday to think of the ways we are tempted by food, power, and schemes to cheat death. While many in the world starve, in the Western and Northern hemispheres we die from the diseases of excess. We have more power than any people ever and less wisdom about how to use it. And our health-care industry is very good at cheating death—good enough that we trust it to do what only God can do: Save us.

Jesus' response to unending food, power, and safety is, simply, "no." We might say with him: No, I won't acquire my livelihood illicitly. No, I won't grab for power in order to dominate and subjugate others. No, I won't try to use religion to avoid such basic human realities as aging and death. And I won't say any of these "no's" alone. I'll do so in a church where we try, creatively, charmingly even, to be as faithful as we can.

[FEBRUARY 21]

Belief and Disbelief

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17 - 4:1; Luke 13:31-35

GENESIS 15 is a key text for the entire Bible. God is preening, as God is wont to do. "Did I mention lately, Abram, that your people will be great?" Only this time Abram isn't having it. He's heard this preening speech before, and has seen no heir. "What will you give me?" he asks God, in the sort of request we Christians teach our children not to pray. Yet God honors the request, takes Abram outside and shows him the stars. Your descendants will be like that, says God. Today, we who are descendants of Abraham

can see God's faithfulness every time we look in the mirror.

Abram believes, "and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). As we can see from his letter to the Romans (4:3), Paul loves this verse! And yet, only two verses later in Genesis, Abram stops believing! "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" (15:8). The trip to the divine planetarium didn't do it. Paul doesn't mention Genesis 15:8. And Christians ever since have been perplexed by the verses that follow: the sacrificed animals, the birds of prey driven away, the sleep, the light, the promise.

God gives us ritual precisely when we cannot understand and forget how to trust. We might complain that we don't understand. And God says, "Quiet! I'm making a promise here."

A student of mine reacted against a demythologizing move I made against a scripture passage (one on angels, I think). He found it remarkable that modernity dismisses the miraculous, and then embraces en masse (to the tune of billions of dollars) elaborate mythologies such as *Star Wars, The Lord of the Rings,* and *Harry Potter.* But when it comes to angels we sneer. Why do we believe the world has to be so believable?

Here's the most unbelievable, mythological, and true thing of all: God becomes part of the world God made. Luke recounts Jesus sighing over Herod's petty dictatorship, weeping over God's favorite city, longing to gather us up like a mother hen. Sometimes God honors our childish requests. Sometimes God weeps at what we do.

And, one time, God became and becomes a child.

[FEBRUARY 28]

A Bountiful Spread

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

WHY DO BAD THINGS happen to good people? It's a beautiful pastoral question, at one point popularized by Rabbi Harold Kushner. The problem is, Jesus seems to have no pastoral sense.

In Luke's recounting of Pilate mixing the blood of Galileans in sacrifice, the people are asking: Did the victims deserve it? No, says Jesus. But if *you* don't repent, *you* will! Or when the tower at Siloam collapsed and killed 18—did they have it coming? No. But if *you* don't change your ways, *you're* a goner! Jesus breaks the fourth wall, pointing right at us, who thought we were safe in our living rooms. When someone asks why bad things happen to good people, try sticking a finger in their face and telling them they're done for. It's what Jesus would do.

Isaiah, on the other hand, has a much kinder, gentler word for us. Isaiah lays out an economics of the kingdom: Come, buy food and wine and milk ... for nothing. God spreads a table of rich bounty. Gentiles—foreigners—will join Israel there. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, God's ways beyond our ways. And God's word is

> Isaiah lays out a kingdom economics: Come, buy food and milk for nothing.

effective—it accomplishes that which it sets out to do. The question implied here is "why do *good* things happen to bad people," or maybe better said, "to all people"?

Because of the generous provision of God.

The entire Bible might be seen as an effort to put our verbs about God into the present tense. Jesus does, with his warning about our "expert" religious questions that cost us nothing personally (see Luke 18:18-23). Isaiah promises a future where the poor are blessed and the foreigner is honored. In 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul tells us that *we* were the ones in the wilderness, drinking from the rock *who is Christ* (imagining Jesus as a rock shambling leglessly in the desert is entirely too wonderful). We want to keep God-talk distant, hypothetical, cool. God keeps coming close, urgently, with passion. These texts leave us with a new, puzzling, and delightful question: Why do *God* things happen to all people?

Because God is always and unendingly good. ■

"Preaching the Word," *Sojourners' online resource for sermon preparation and Bible study, is available at sojo.net/ptw.*

Join Us in Creating a More Just and Compassionate World

Come and experience overseas Catholic mission with Maryknoll Lay Missioners!

Visit **mklm.org** to learn more or contact Lindsay Doucette at **join@mklm.org** or **800-818-5276**

maryknoll lay missioners

PO Box 307 • Maryknoll, NY, 10545-0307

Frozen Solid

Ken Davis

IF YOU HAVEN'T done so already, you should start planning how you'll spend the next 11 months of your life, unless you're traveling to Mars or someplace where the news media won't be covering the presidential election. On Mars, for example, you'd be less interested in politics and more concerned about the weather, since an unexpected storm last summer separated Matt Damon from his crew. It also separated several million dollars from Americans who went to see *The Martian*, but it was totally worth it. As opposed to Matt Damon's other space movie, *Interstellar*, which was *interawful* and had patrons screaming for their money back. (Spoiler alert: It finally ends.)

But for those of us trapped here on Earth, there are probably only three ways to separate ourselves from the incessant noise of a presidential election year:

1. Sell all your possessions and give to the poor, then follow maybe some guy named Rev. Richard or something who lives in a bunker with lots of canned goods. Wait, that's wrong. Sorry, I spilled some coffee on the last part of Matthew 19 and I was just guessing the rest. So forget that one.

It's winter. So snuggle up, and tune out.

2. Join a monastery. Trappist is always a good choice, as long as you love gardening and thinking for long stretches of time (never tried it myself) and don't mind wearing a long cassock. Although underneath you can wear whatever you want. (You could walk around in purple bike shorts, with a gaudy corporate logo, because who's gonna know? And they don't check.) Monasteries are good places to be in the world but not of it, or the other way around, if that works better for you.

3. Or do what I do: Obtain a granddaughter, 5-ish, who will keep you grounded, literally. You'll spend most of the year on the floor, helping her assemble Lego's Enchanted Mountain Ice Castle from *Frozen*, in various shades of Disney pink, much of that time looking for a tiny little part, like the hinge to the door of the Magic Fairy Unicorn Corral. After an hour of fruitless searching you will swear it has not been lost but was, in fact, not packed at the factory, a deliberate omission prompted by that well-known Scandinavian sense of humor. I can just picture the factory workers in Denmark, holding up the missing piece and laughing at their cleverness, then awkwardly exchanging Danish high-fives (blonde people just look silly when they do that). Meanwhile, back in the U.S., you want to shove something up their ümlaut.

BUT AT LEAST you won't be thinking about Hillary's email, or the fact that Bernie Sanders doesn't own a comb (for gosh sakes, get a hat!), or that when Donald Trump builds his wall he will be hiring only American corporations, which rules out the Lego company, even though they just developed industrial-grade blocks that have proven to keep out foreign-born unicorns.

With a young child in the house, you have to change your usual election-year habits. There's no listening to NPR, because the 5-year-old will ask too many awkward questions about refugees, or take it personally when Chris Christie says he doesn't like 5-year-olds.

You won't be reading the newspaper, because it will be spread across the kitchen table under her latest craft project. Reading George Will is hard enough without having to tilt your head sideways to do it through fairy princess body parts made from playdough.

And don't even think about secretly checking the news on your computer. Kids can smell an open laptop and will come running to watch cat videos.

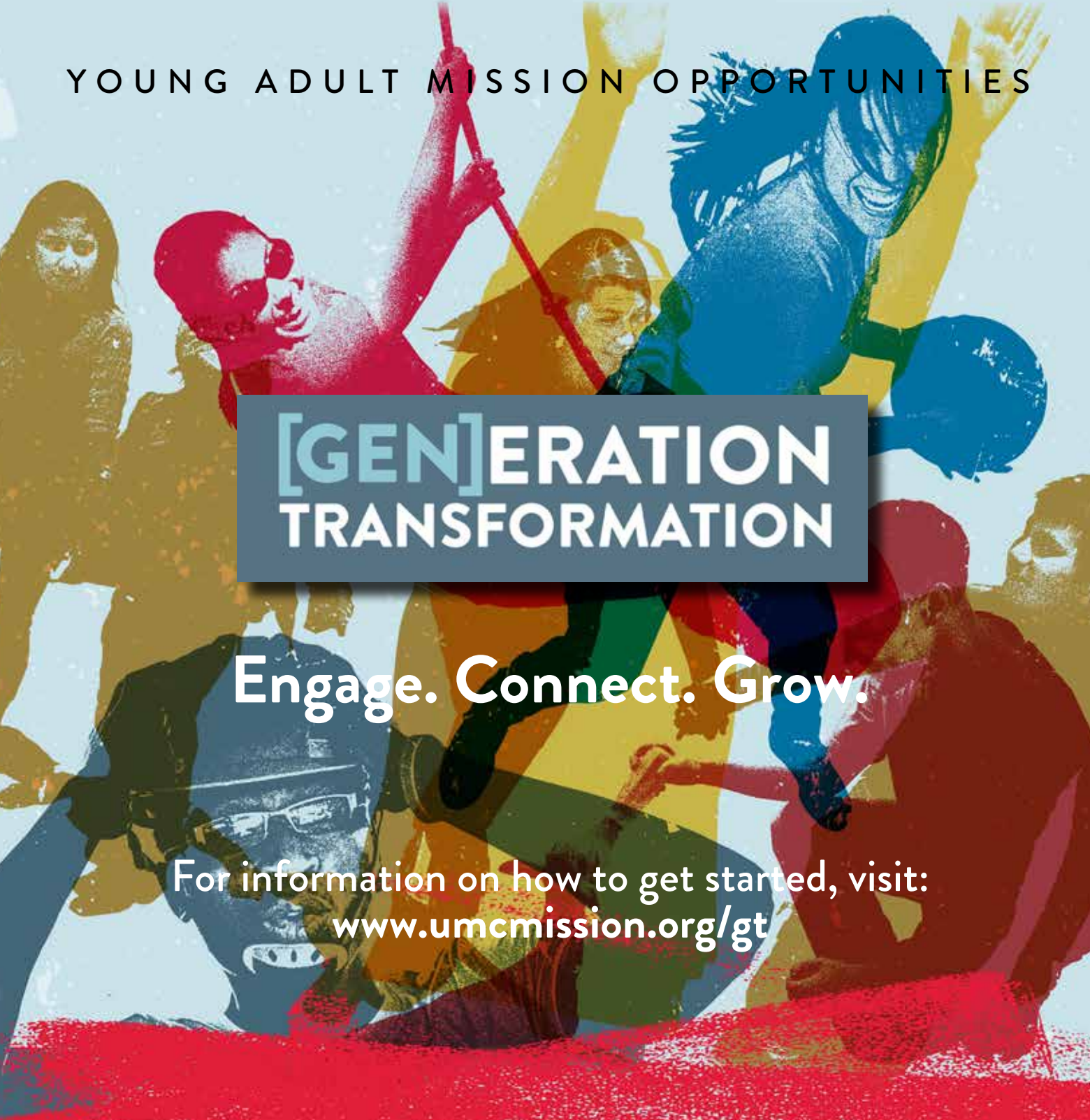
In short, if you went with Option 3 above, just forget about politics and surrender yourself to the Disney dark side. Although, to my credit, I held the line recently against a corporate-branded birthday event. The granddaughter wanted a *Frozen*-themed party, but I insisted on calling it a "Condition of Water at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or Below" party. It's my way of sticking it to The Man. [Awkward Danish high-five.] ■

Ed Spivey Jr. *is art director of* Sojourners.

Train and live in community with other men and women who are responding to the gospel mandate to love our neighbors as ourselves by providing students in low-income neighborhoods with the same, or better, quality of education as is available to any student in Memphis.

The vision of MTR is to use our specific work within education, in partnership with other holistic organizations, to help restore communities so that all individuals can become empowered contributors to our city, and people of all races and classes can engage with one another in peace.

YOUNG ADULT MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



[GEN]ERATION TRANSFORMATION

Engage. Connect. Grow.

For information on how to get started, visit:
www.umcmission.org/gt

Take the Journey!

CONNECTING THE CHURCH IN MISSION

GLOBAL MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church